

Caribbean Resorts' Marketing Strategies Boost Occupancies



CORAL GABLES, Fla. – September 30, 2009 – In the current economic climate, the hospitality industry has been feeling the effects of travelers cutting back, and no place is this more evident than in the Caribbean. In spite of this, some Caribbean resorts are weathering the storm thanks to solid service and marketing programs and an emphasis on the importance of repeat business. Within this group are St. Lucia's Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa and Aruba's Bucuti Beach Resort, which have maintained high occupancy rates at a time when other island resorts are shuttering. Below, decision makers at both resorts offer an inside perspective on how they've kept guests coming through the doors.

At Bucuti Beach Resort in

Aruba, the sales and marketing team has maintained high occupancy levels by focusing on what differentiates the resort from others in Aruba and cultivating close, personal relationships with loyal guests instead of offering discounts.

Since opening in 1987, Bucuti has maintained an annual occupancy level of 90 percent or above and has not fallen victim to the low numbers being reported throughout the industry over the last year. Resort owner and CEO Ewald Biemans believes this is a direct result of the loyal repeat guest base that has been cultivated through years of personal relationship building. In fact, return guests have accounted for nearly half of Bucuti's bookings in 2009.

"It has always been our

philosophy to treat the resort as our home and guests as family," said Biemans. "We know our guests by name and work to develop a personal connection with them, whether it's making sure every member of the staff congratulates newlyweds when they see them or having a drink with a couple at dinner. We hope they feel so at home that they are planning their next trip before they ever check out."

The Bucuti team stays in constant correspondence with guests through a resort Facebook page and Twitter account, as well as a Facebook page run by the resort's wedding planner. Bucuti has more than 1,000 fans on Facebook, many of whom interact directly with one another and resort management by sharing their photos and experiences. This open stream of contact has allowed Bucuti's ownership and management to correspond directly with guests now more than ever before.

In addition to attracting business from repeat guests, Bucuti has placed an increased emphasis on the fact that it is the only beachfront hotel in Aruba that caters exclusively to couples, and those in the market for romantic travel have recognized this. For example, Bucuti's Tara Suites were built to honeymooners specifications, and because of this, they are always the first to sell out even though they are the highest priced rooms.

In Biemans' opinion, couples



will still be getting married and celebrating anniversaries regardless of what is going on in the economy, and Bucuti will continue to deliver a top-notch experience that keeps attracting guests.

"We are confident that by keeping our price structure intact and not discounting, we are supporting the value of our product and this has not distracted the type of customer we target from booking their wedding, honeymoon or vacation at Bucuti," said Biemans.

About Bucuti Beach Resort: Bucuti Beach Resort featuring Tara Beach Suites & Spa is

Aruba's premier, intimate, upscale boutique resort for couples. Located on the white powder sands of Eagle Beach, Bucuti offers 104 guest rooms and an abundance of contemporary European charm in addition to a caring and attentive staff and a commitment to sustainable tourism. Bucuti Beach Resort is ISO 14001 certified and has been recognized by notable organizations such as the Caribbean Hotel Association, GreenGlobe, American Express and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association for its environmentally responsible hotel operations. For more information, visit www.bucuti.com. □



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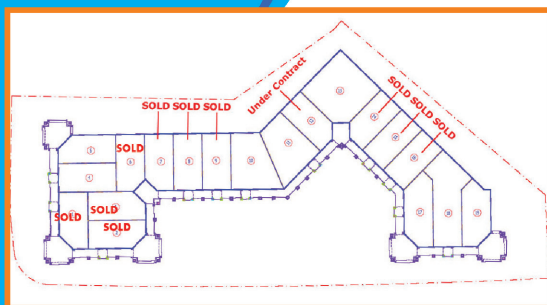
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Search continues for US Diplomat Missing in Curacao



WILLEMSTAD - Netherlands Antilles newspapers are reporting the disappearance of an American diplomat assigned to the U.S. Consulate General Curacao. The diplomat identified as James Hogan, 49, reportedly disappeared on Thursday evening, (September 24) after he attended a reception at the American Consulate. Police statement reported on September 29 says that "On Friday morning, at 09.00 a.m., Mrs. Hogan reported that her husband was missing. The evening before he left his home and never returned. He left his home to go for a walk." It is reported that local authorities are assisted by the Dutch Forensic Investigation Team from the Forensic Institute of The Netherlands since last Sunday." And that they also have at their disposal "four dogs trained especially in the realm of finding missing persons which were provided by said Dutch Forensic Institute of The Netherlands."

St. Maarten Island News reported the search for James Hogan on September 28. The following day it published information released by the local police. On Tuesday, it reported that the FBI and the State Department have joined the search for the missing diplomat.

The State Department says that "Vice Consul James Hogan left

his residence last Thursday and has not been heard from since, and we continue to work this with Curaçaoan authorities."

According to State Department info the Consulate General Curaçao represents U.S. interests to three governmental authorities: the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the autonomous Netherlands Antilles, and the quasi-independent country of Aruba. The consular district includes six islands and spreads over a distance of 500 miles. It is the destination of millions of American tourists each year, the home of about 6,000 U.S.-citizen residents, and the location of over \$1 billion of American investments. There are important – and sometimes urgent – consular and representational demands on the post for all the islands, including the farthest and smallest.

The OIG report from 2008 indicates that Curaçao is a 15 percent cost of living post and a three-year, two rest and recuperation, assignment. Entry-level officers (ELOs) get a two-year tour with one rest and recuperation break. It is considered a medium threat for crime post. And that this usually manifests particularly towards tourists in Curaçao.

Curaçao, an "independent mission" within the Western Hemisphere Bureau has 27 direct-hire and eligible family member personnel and 13 LE staff personnel. Of the 27 direct hire employees, 23 are employees from different agencies. Mr. Hogan is listed as the consulate's political/economic/consular officer. He is one of the four State Department direct-hire employees at the US Consulate General in Curacao.

It's better to be safe than sorry AAA reminds everyone who visits the airport to park in the parking lot!

ORANJESTAD – We're nearing another holiday season and many are getting ready to travel. Therefore AAA wishes to remind everyone about the parking rules at the airport.

It is prohibited to park vehicles in front of the airport terminal, such in order to prevent that these vehicles endanger the safety or security of the passengers, employees and other airport users.

It is allowed to drop someone off in front of the airport, but it's prohibited to park a vehicle in front of the airport. That's the reason why AAA tows all vehicles that are parked in front of the airport without any drivers in them. When a vehicle is towed, the owner must pay Awg. 75,- for operational and administrative costs in order to get his/her vehicle back.

It's better to be safe than sorry, therefore AAA kindly reminds you to bear the parking rules in mind when visiting the airport. It's better to pay Awg. 3,- in parking fees than Awg. 75,- in towing fees. □



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13 year old

Allyson Ponson will represent Aruba at the TYR Coastal Classic

In Myrtle Beach



MYRTLE BEACH - Swimmers from five states and seven countries will be competing this weekend, October 2nd - 4th in Myrtle Beach at the TYR Coastal Classic, a USA Swimming sanctioned meet.

According to a news release, The TYR Coastal Classic will host 300 swimmers Friday evening through Sunday evening at Pepper Geddings Recreation Center in Myrtle Beach.

Morning sessions will provide competition for age group swimmers from 16 teams throughout the Southeast. Afternoon sessions will feature top regional high school age swimmers competing against elite international swimmers from Aruba, Bolivia, Panama, Brazil, Kuwait, Venezuela, and Slovakia.

"We are really pleased with the caliber of swimming that will be represented at the Coastal Classic," Meet Director David Dear said in the release.

"When we began planning this event six months ago, we never expected the level of enthusiasm and response from the international swimming community and other teams from outside the area."

The TYR Coastal Classic marks Myrtle Beach's entry into highlevel competitive aquatics competition.

Visiting athletes include:

Daniele Tirabassi (Venezuela), represented his country in 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2009 World Swimming Championships in Rome
Yousef Al Askari (Kuwait), 15 year old boy currently training in Florida, ranked number one in the United States in several events (100 Fly, 200 Fly, 200 Free), top swimmer in the Middle East
Katarina Milly (Slovakia), one of the top sprinters in Eastern Europe, competed in the 2009 World Championships in Rome

Ismael Ortiz (Panama), 2004 and 2008 Panamanian

Olympic Team member, NCAA Division II National Champion and Record Holder (Drury University)

Allyson Ponson (Aruba), 13 year old girl, Team Aruba member, elite FINA international ranking in butterfly for her age group

"Swimming is an international sport. Growing up in Brazil, when we reached a high level in our sport, foreign travel was a given," Fabio da Silva, Head Coach of host team Coastal Aquatic Club and former Waccamaw High School Swim Team Coach said in the release. "I am excited to be a part of bringing this experience to Myrtle Beach."

Organizers say 225 of the competing athletes will be travelling from outside the Grand Strand and will be making a direct impact on local hotels and restaurants.

Monty Morrow, General Manager of The Caribbean Resort, sees sports tourism events like this as an

opportunity to grow their revenue.

"Any time that an event came bring several hundred room nights in the fall, it is significant," said Morrow. "But what is unique to the TYR Coastal Classic, is the growth potential and the prestige of a top level event. This is kind of untapped and we want to see this thing grow."

The 2009 TYR Coastal Classic is hosted by the Coastal Aquatic Club (<http://www.swimcoastal.com>) under sanction of USA Swimming (<http://www.usaswimming.org>), the national governing body of swimming in the United States.

USA Swimming is responsible for selecting and training teams for international competition including the Olympic Games.

Hours of Competition:

Friday, October 2 5:00PM-7:45PM

Saturday, October 3 8:30AM-1:15PM

Sunday, October 4 8:30AM-3:30PM

Location: Pepper Geddings Recreation Center, 3205 North Oak Street, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577



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AirTran adding flights to winter escapes



By Clara Bosonetto Maerz

Here's a primer on what's new at AirTran Airways. The carrier is adding some new dots to its route map.

All of the destinations are sunny, warm and places to where we can escape (affordably) during winter's gloomy days. Get ready to go!

On Dec. 17, AirTran will add two daily nonstop flights between Atlanta and Nassau in the Bahamas.

One-way rates start from \$124 and require at least a 28-day advance notice of travel. Passport required for U.S. citizens.

Also on Dec. 17, service to Key West, Fla., will be offered on same plane service via Orlando (change of aircraft is not required). Rates requiring a 21-day advance notice of travel start from \$159.

Starting on Dec. 19, AirTran will add a nonstop

Saturday-only flight between Atlanta and Aruba in the Netherlands Antilles island chain, just off the coast of Venezuela, South America (with Bonaire and Curacao). Passport is required for U.S. citizens. Montego Bay, Jamaica, will be served daily starting Feb. 11 with one-way rates from \$165, based on a two-week or more advance purchase notice. Passport is required for U.S. citizens. □

Sumner expects Barbados to be biggest challenge

NASSAU, Bahamas, CMC – Title-holders Bahamas are eyeing ex-champions Barbados as their biggest threats when they contest the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Bodybuilding Championships this weekend in Grenada.

A 12-member team is set to travel Wednesday for the competition and the Bahamas Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation (BBFF) president Danny Sumner believes Barbados will be among the most potent contenders in the championship.

"The biggest rivalry will be Barbados but we are prepared to do it," Sumner said.

Hosts Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Aruba and Guyana are among the other teams set to contest the October 1-4 competition.

Multiple CAC medallist James "Jay" Darling and other local standouts Raymond Tucker, Faye Rolle and Donna Williams are in the Bahamas squad, coached by Wellington Sears. □





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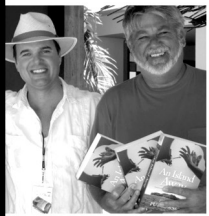
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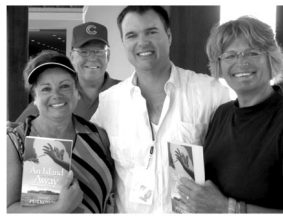
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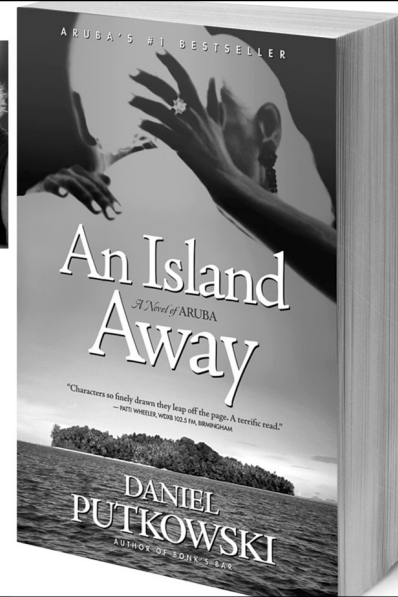
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The Village Food and Wine Festival

Early Christmas in Paradise tonight



Cactus Jack's will participate in tonight's festival at The Village in Palm Beach across from the Radisson Resort starting at 7 P.M.

PALM BEACH - Don't miss The Village Food and Wine Festival tonight, Thursday, October 1, 2009 at Starting at 7pm at The Village in Palm Beach. Fifteen booths will be set up at the courtyard with live music and a dj. The theme is Christmas in Paradise.

The Village Food and Wine Festival is a food festival that is organized every once a month, each time with a different theme to it. The idea of the food festival is for each restaurant / store/ shop that participates to present and sell their upcoming products/menu for a certain holiday or celebration. For this month the festival has been moved to 1 October 2009 due to the elections.

(DJ Yeimy) and a live band (The Untouchables) will entertain everyone who comes.

Participants: MooMba Beach, Hadicurari, Salt & Pepper, Tango, Fishes and More, Sopranos, Cactus Jack, Chino Latino, Mambo Jambo, Café the Plaza, Cuban Cigars, Le Gourmet, Pepia Est (wines), Aruba Tourism Authority with Aruba Music Festival tickets. This first event is sponsored in part by Compra, Pepia Est and Balashi.

The Village is located across from the Radisson Resort. □

Support Magazine Journalist visiting Aruba



ORANJESTAD - Recently Mr. Hans Hendriksen and his assistant Hoen of Support Magazine of the Netherlands were here visiting the Island. This is the first time a wheel-chaired journalist is invited to

the Island. Support Magazine caters to wheel chair bound tourist, and Aruba has become one of the Island in the Caribbean that caters to this target group. Mr Hendriksen also commented that he is



very impressed with the product Aruba in general and what it has to offer. Aruba will be featured in the November edition of Support Magazine. Mr. Ricardo Croes of the Aruba Tourism Authority



was in charged with these two VIP's and also putting a program together for them. A special thank you to the Bucuti Beach Resort where Mr. Hendriksen and his Assistant

Hoen stayed. Pictured you can see Mr. Ricardo Croes of the ATA together with Mr. Hendriksen at Alto Vista, the Aloe Museum and the California Light House. □

Michelle Obama arrives in Copenhagen for IOC vote



U.S. first lady Michelle Obama alights her plane as she arrives at Copenhagen's Kastrup Airport, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009. Michelle Obama has joined the Chicago 2016 bid team who are competing with Tokyo, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro for the right to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. The IOC will choose the winning city in a vote on Friday Oct. 2 in Copenhagen.

(AP Photo/Claus Bjoern Larsen, Polfoto)

By NANCY ARMOUR

COPENHAGEN — Michelle Obama didn't waste any time impressing International Olympic Committee members.

As the first lady walked through the hotel lobby Wednesday, she spotted IOC

member Nicole Hoevertsz, who only a day earlier had been appointed permanent secretary of Aruba's Council of Ministers.

"She said, 'Congratulations on your new appointment.' She already knew," Hoevertsz said. "That was a

very nice detail."

Mrs. Obama arrived here Wednesday to lend her support to Chicago's efforts to win the 2016 Games. As head of Chicago's delegation — and her husband's representative until he arrives Friday — she plans to meet with as many IOC members as possible to try to persuade them to pick her hometown over Rio de Janeiro, Madrid and Tokyo.

"I'm so happy to be here, so excited," Mrs. Obama said. "We've got a lot of work to do. We're not taking anything for granted, so I'm going to go talk to some voters."

President Barack Obama has been an ardent supporter of the bid since he was a U.S. Senator, and he's been working the phones in recent weeks. But when it looked as if the health care debate might keep him in Washington, he asked his wife to come to Copenhagen to meet with IOC members.

And there are few people better to sell Chicago's bid than Michelle Obama.

Funny, gracious and incredibly accomplished, she's one of the few people who can rival her husband's popularity. She also knows the neighborhoods where the games would be, having grown up on the South Side of Chicago and lived just a short walk from the planned Olympic stadium before moving to Washington. "Chicago is a wonderful host city," Mrs. Obama said. "With great people, wonderful facilities. The hospitality is like no other."

She'll do her best to show that hospitality over the next two days. Chicago 2016 has a two-room suite at the Marriott, the official IOC hotel, and the first lady has a "pretty lengthy" schedule of one-on-one meetings with IOC members Wednesday and Thursday, said Valerie Jarrett, Obama's senior adviser and former vice chair of Chicago 2016.

Pictures of Chicago and its planned venues decorate the warm, bright rooms of the suite, with one wall entirely covered by a photo of the picturesque lakefront — where most of Chicago's



File photo: Courtney Hurley of the United States, left, receives her gold medal from Nicole Hoevertsz after winning the individual epee fencing finals over Canada's Julie Leprohon during the Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Tuesday, July 17, 2007.

venues would be clustered. The white leather furniture is comfortable and inviting, the perfect spot for a chat. And some lobbying.

"It's a little taste of Chicago, right here in Copenhagen," Jarrett said. "Our goal is this: We don't take a single vote for granted. We are going to work as we have over the course of the last three-plus years in these last couple of days to continue to advocate on why Chicago is absolutely the most spectacular city in the world to host these games." Although IOC president Jacques Rogge has taken great pains to say heads of state aren't expected to attend, their presence has been instrumental in recent votes. Tony Blair is widely credited for tipping the 2012 vote in London's favor, spending two days doing one-on-one meetings with IOC members in his hotel suite. Vladimir Putin did much the same thing two years later, when Sochi won the 2014 Olympics.

Jarrett met with Blair last week to get advice on making the best use of these last few days, and while she won't divulge details, she said his input was "extremely helpful."

Of course, the Obamas and Jarrett have a little experience with elections, too. The president's campaign prized itself on getting to know voters and finding out what mattered to them. By the time election day came, voters felt as if they

knew Obama and that he truly cared about their interests.

If Mrs. Obama's brief stroll through the lobby was any indication, they're using the same strategy here.

When she spotted Austin Sealy, an IOC member from Barbados, she shook his hand and said, "Good to see you." She knew about Hoevertsz's new job — something most people in Aruba probably aren't even aware of — and happily accepted a pin. When David Robinson, one of the original Dream Teamers and a member of the U.S. delegation here, went to introduce himself, she grinned and said, "I know who you are! Another Robinson. I tell people we're related."

Mrs. Obama's maiden name was Robinson. "Our first lady enjoys extraordinary popularity around the world," Jarrett said. "It's a big part of why the president asked her to be a part of our team. In addition to which, she was born and raised in Chicago, not far from where some of the venues will be, and she knows and loves the city." □



Former U.S. Olympic athlete Michael Johnson, left, and current U.S. Olympic gold winning gymnast Nastia Liukin, right, and other members of the Chicago 2016 Olympic bid team are seen just before finishing a fun run outside a hotel on the harbour in Copenhagen, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009. Chicago is competing with Tokyo, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro for the right to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. The IOC will choose the winning city in a vote on Friday Oct. 2 in Copenhagen. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)



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The Bistro's menu offers everyone's favorites, but with a culinary Belgian twist. This might be an unusual

presentation, an awesome side dish, a stunning combination, a surprising regional dish or a dessert that takes you to heaven and back a few times. Good service and lots of smiles will surely make the Bistro one of your favorite places to go to. Open for coffee, lunch, drinks, dinner and cocktails.

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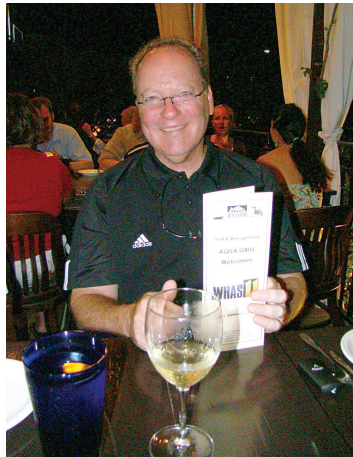
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Incentive group WHAS enjoys intimacy of Aqua Grill



service, and menus that can be tailored just for them. On Monday evening, another incentive group enjoyed a dinner event at Aqua Grill, which was coordinated by the Aqua Grill event planning staff. The group of 36, here on the



PALM BEACH — “Not too big, not too small...and the best fresh seafood on the island,” said a meeting planner recently when asked why she chose Aqua Grill as the

location for one of her group’s special dinners. The Palm Beach seafood sensation seems to be a hot spot for group events, with beautiful décor, warm island

island with WHAS Channel 11 out of Louisville, Kentucky, and enjoying the hospitality of the Hyatt Regency Aruba, indulged in fresh local catches, the island’s largest raw bar,

and live Maine lobster. Aqua Grill has the perfect environ for group dinner events, and a staff dedicated to making each occasion special



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EAGLE BEACH - Oasis Luxury Condominiums is a Mediterranean-style designed complex located on the prestigious Eagle Beach right next to Chalet Suisse consisting of a total of 35 units distributed on five (5) floors. The one, two and three bedroom suites have a perfect view of the ocean and beach. The units include, among other amenities, floor to ceiling glass doors and panoramic windows, spacious terraces, marble bathrooms, European kitchens

**35 EXCLUSIVE OCEAN VIEW UNITS
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tributed on five (5) floors. The one, two and three bedroom suites have a perfect view of the ocean and beach. The units include, among other amenities, floor to ceiling glass doors and panoramic windows, spacious terraces, marble bathrooms, European kitchens

with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool.

The garden will feel like an oasis true to the projects name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the common area to lounge and relax. Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclusive to the owners.

Construction on Oasis at Eagle

Beach is moving fast. Fifteen of the thirty five units have already been sold. The condominiums will be ready for occupancy by March 2010. Oasis is located on Eagle Beach which allows for an easy access, even on foot, to the best casinos, restaurants, golf courses, shopping areas and night life the Aruba has to offer. The experienced sales team of Oasis invites you for a visit to learn about this new gem on the beach.

The site tour will take you up in the complex where you will enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and beach as well as a wonderful view of Oranjestad where the cruise ships are docked. The views from the rooftop terrace are stunning to say the least. The Oasis sales team is ready to assist you.

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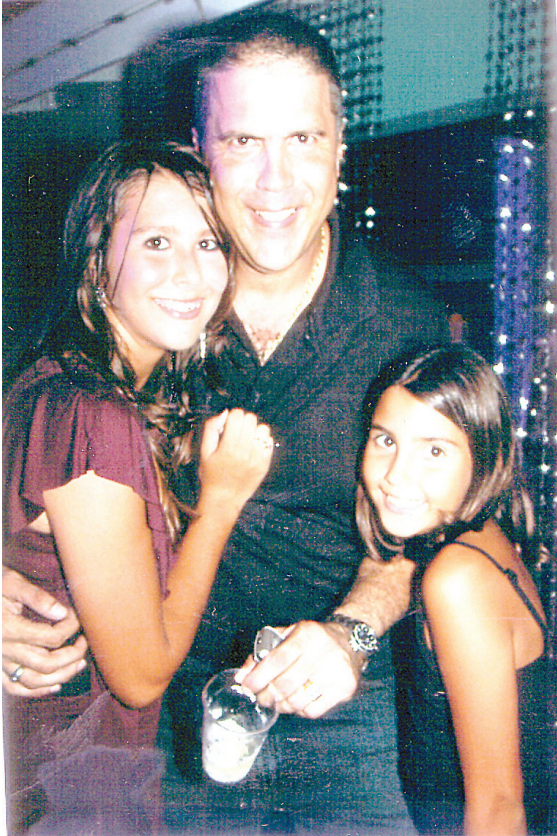
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Closure needed

Expectations are high for today's meeting of the Dutch Kingdom Political Steering Group in Willemstad, in the first place because of the prospect of finally securing a date for the constitutional changes to take effect, with 10-10-10 being mentioned. Whether that indeed will take place remains to be seen, as Dutch State Secretary for Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten has emphasised that the conditions agreed on for particularly St. Maarten and Curaçao to become autonomous countries in the Kingdom must be met.

The talks on dismantling the Netherlands Antilles are being overshadowed somewhat by several issues. For one thing, the opposition in Curaçao believes there should be no further negotiations until a law proposed by the Netherlands to regulate the movement of people within the Kingdom that was rejected unanimously by both Curaçao's Island Council and the Antillean Parliament is taken off the table.

Antillean Prime Minister Emily de Jongh-Elhage says one has nothing to do with the other, but Dutch Justice Minister Ernst Hirsch Ballin, who presented the draft, stated that such a regulation was deemed necessary precisely because of the new future relations in the Kingdom. The fact is that the controversial proposal is not a consensus Kingdom Law for which agreement of the Antilles and Aruba is needed.

The rejection by Bonaire's new Island Government of the agreements made by the former UPB government for the island to become an overseas public entity of the Netherlands is capturing much attention as well, not in the last place because of the possible consequences for the BES islands as a whole, of which St. Eustatius and Saba are also to be part. Bonaire wants to hold off on changing the Kingdom Charter regarding the constitutional reforms until it can hold a new referendum, which Bijleveld-Schouten has no intention of doing.

How all this will reflect on the final outcome of today's talks in Curaçao remains to be seen, but matters are not getting any simpler, also because of the changing political climate in The Hague when it comes to the islands. On the other hand, nobody said it would be easy and it's clear that people in all the islands desire closure regarding the constitutional change quagmire that has plagued the Dutch Caribbean for decades. □

*** Human Hints Daily ***

Your Dynamic Action Plan

Exactly how we will reach our goals is not for us to decide, but it is important to always have a plan and take action toward the goal. We must maintain a delicate balance between staying focused on what we want and releasing control when the situation

warrants. We define the destination, and the path to get there is Life's Mystery. Once we know what we want, we can create a Dynamic Action Plan to help focus our actions toward our desires, while allowing the path to unfold in surprising, mysterious ways.

When you plan something, you think about it, you analyze the variables and possible outcomes. Your thoughts are focused on different ways to reach the goal. When you write down your plan, you solidify it into three dimensions. Any construction project requires a set of written plans, and your life is the most important construction project ever.

Include a timeline in your plan, and set dates when you expect to reach milestones. When time is an active part of your plan, it will help your mind accept the new reality that your goals are going to happen. Milestones are important for many reasons.

They help you measure your progress. You can look at an achievement and say, "Last month, this was just an idea. Now it is done, and I'm that much closer to my goal." Milestones encourage you along the way because they represent tangible success that you have achieved through action.

Once you have a solid plan on paper, you must start to take action. If your plan seems too overwhelming, break each main goal into manageable tasks. As you accomplish each small task, you will be getting closer to the goal. When you take action, you put energy into three dimensions. Even when your Action Plan changes, your action is not wasted. Just the intent of taking time and focused energy to reach your goal will solidify it further, even if the specific action did not in physical reality, bring you closer to your dreams.

Your Action Plan must remain Dynamic. Be willing to change it as necessary. Your life will change as you get closer to your desires, and you must be willing to change with it. It is important to keep the goal clear in your mind, but the path that leads you there is completely unknown. Knowing where you end up and not how you'll get there is what makes life an exciting adventure. Since you create the destination, you can relax as the path changes, because you know where you'll end up no matter how you get there.

Keep your plan malleable as your situation changes. Your desires might also change as you grow, but your goals define your direction, so if your goals jump all over the place, you will not be able to follow a set direction, and you will get nowhere.

Focused action over time is a big key to manifestation, but the action should be directed toward the same end. If you take action in different directions, you will not get very far. Stay focused on your goal, follow your Dynamic Action Plan, and change it as your life changes.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought. □

World Cup Day 3 belongs to the 'Boys from Bonaire'



Elton (Taty) Frans is on fire! - Paul Carter pic
PWA Tour media

It's a one, two, three for the boys from Bonaire, with Taty Frans taking the lead after a full round of furious freestyle at the Colgate World Cup on Sylt's Westerland Beach in Germany. The forecast was calling for plenty of wind from sunrise to sunset, so head judge Duncan Coombs made the call to meet for a 07:00 skipper's briefing. Unfortunately for the wave sailors, the swell had failed to build, giving the freestylers a chance to wow the crowds. Both the competitors and spectators were not disappointed as both a single and double elimination of freestyle were completed. With the difficult freestyle conditions that the sailors were up against, the higher ranked competitors played it fairly safe in the first round to ensure they made the cut and advanced through. There was still plenty of action on the water, with huge shaka's and stylish eslidors from the World's best,

pleasing the huge number of spectators on the beach. Unfortunately, Canadian sailor Philip Soltysiak (Starboard, Dakine) pushed a little bit too hard and dislocated his shoulder during his first round heat against Thomas Traversa (Tabou, Gaastra). The crew had to help him off the water and take him to hospital to have it put back in place. Highlight's form the second round included the battle between 2008 Freestyle World Champion Jose 'Gollito' Estredo (Fanatic, North) and light wind freestyle master Steven Van Broeckhoven (F2, MauiSails). Both of these guys were fully going for it and landing numerous combination moves and big power moves. The day could have well been the World Championship final, but it was only the second round. Estredo dug deep and nailed a few more stylish moves to take the win and move into the quarter-finals. The Russian sailor Yegor Popretinskiy (JP, NeilPryde, MFC) had an easy second round due to the fact that Antxon Otaegui (JP, NeilPryde, MFC) was still suffering from an ankle injury, which he picked up earlier in the year. Otaegui tried to make it out for his heat but was in too much pain to compete. The quarter-finals were very tight in both halves of the draw with difficult decisions being made by the judges. Taty Frans (Starboard, MauiSails) sailed an

extremely impressive heat to take down the current world champion Estredo. His brother, Tonky Frans (F2, Gaastra), sailed an equally impressive heat to take the scalp of 2007 Freestyle world champion, Marcilio Browne (Fanatic, North, MFC). On the other side of the draw, Kiri Thode's (Starboard, Gaastra) technical superiority helped him get ahead of Four Dimension's director, Andre Paskowski (Fanatic, North). And Nicolas Akgazciyan (Starboard, Gun) took down the young Russian, Popretinskiy. The Frans brothers' success meant that they met in the semi-final. Taty managed to style his way through the heat with a huge shaka diablo and an awesome culo. His brother Tonky put every effort in to match him with a nice back loop and a shaka, but it wasn't quite enough. Thode stopped his French rival Akgazciyan dead in his tracks with a super smooth funnel and an amazing culo, amongst other high scoring moves, thus putting himself in the final of the single elimination alongside Taty Frans. In the losers final, Akgazciyan was outclassed by Tonky Frans, who landed almost twice as many moves, including a huge shaka and a silky smooth burner, making it a 1,2,3 for the boys from Bonaire. In the final, both sailors were busting out their best moves in the extremely difficult

conditions. At times they were crossing over matching each other move for move. Frans nailed a super clean punch, so Thode replied with the same. It was only when Thode started to throw in trademark moves, like the culo and air funnel cana brava that he nudged ahead. In the end, the judge's decision was final, and Kiri Thode took the freestyle single elimination at the 2009 Colgate World Cup Sylt. An elated Thode commented "I'm super happy to be in the lead at the moment, but it's not over yet!" The wind continued to blow allowing a full double elimination to run. Traversa was punishing his victims from the off and marched his way through until he met Estredo, who quickly stopped him. On the other side of the draw, Van Broeckhoven was flying through his heats, seeing off top freestylers such as Quincy Offringa (Starboard, Severne), and Paskowski, but during his final heat, he failed to complete a final move on starboard tack, and in a split decision from the judges, Popretinskiy advanced instead. Estredo quickly took down Popretinskiy, and then met Akgazciyan. This was one of the closest heats of the contest and Akgazciyan sailed an absolute blinder, but couldn't quite match the 2008 World Champion, Estredo. Estredo had sailed numerous heats by the time he met

Tonky Frans, and this was clear to see. A fresh faced and super excited Tonky hit the water with a smile on his face, and Estredo didn't manage to steal it from him! They both landed their full quota of moves, but Tonky stole the show and stopped Estredo from advancing any further. It was a family affair in the next heat, with the Frans brothers sailing flat out against each other. Taty Frans showed his brother who was boss though and spun his way into the final against Kiri Thode. Taty Frans continued to consistently throw down both stylish and technical moves in the final against Thode. The conditions looked extremely difficult, yet both of them managed to pull off the most complex new-school freestyle moves, including burners, e-slidors, and massive shakas. Judges found it hard to make a decision, but finally gave it to Taty Frans, which meant that because Thode had won the single elimination, Frans would have to beat him again to win the double. So the final was set; a Thode versus Frans showdown for the double elimination crown. At first, Frans failed to land the stylish moves he was nailing so easily in the previous heat, but luckily for him Thode had fallen a few times too. In the last few minutes, the sailors went into overdrive and were landing three tricks per run, creating an amazing spectacle for those gathered on the beach. It was a close call for the judges to make, but in the end, Taty Frans had done enough to secure the double elimination victory. Freestyle results: 1st: Taty Frans (Starboard, MauiSails) 2nd: Kiri Thode (Starboard, Gaastra) 3rd: Tonky Frans (F2, Gaastra) 4th: Jose 'Gollito' Estredo (Fanatic, North) 5th: Nicolas Akgazciyan (Starboard, Gun) The action in Sylt was at full throttle for much of the day, making up for the past two days of waiting for wind. The forecast looks good for racing tomorrow so be sure to tune in. ☐

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Veteran earns scuba certification

By SHAWNA T. TURNER

Former Army National Guard Sgt. Erik Burmeister lost the use of his legs in a low-speed motorcycle crash more than two years ago. Now a paraplegic, Burmeister received his scuba diving certification in Bonaire over the weekend.

During his last training dive at the East Lycoming YMCA before his trip to the Caribbean island, Burmeister compared scuba diving to sit skiing, which is a type of skiing that people who have lost the use of their legs can do alongside others without the disability.

“One of the things that’s great about scuba is it’s like sit skiing. The scuba diving is like an equalizer, you can do the same thing with or without your legs. But, because you wear the equipment that makes you float, it is not very hard. It’s kind of like floating in the air and you are propelling yourself with your hands,” Burmeister said.

According to Burmeister, these types of sports enable him to

overcome the mobility issues he has to deal with everyday.

Wounded Warriors, a program that helps wounded veterans, worked diligently to make Burmeister’s goal a reality.

According to Dave Reidenbach, retail membership manager of Diving Equipment and Marketing Association that works with the program, he was able to touch base with Rich Best, owner of Sunken Treasure Scuba Center in Jersey Shore, to coordinate the diving instruction.

“My industry works through the Wounded Warrior program. The point is, somebody called me from the diving industry and said ‘we have this wounded warrior. Would you work with him?’ Here are people that are giving back to community projects. These are for people that could use some help,” Best said.

The scuba center and the East Lycoming YMCA worked together to bring the scuba training to Burmeister, free of

charge.

As if learning how to dive under these circumstances wasn’t unique enough, Burmeister will finish out his certification in Bonaire.

“I like the adrenaline sports. It is still something most people consider on the edge. I have never gone scuba diving in the ocean before. I don’t know what it will be like. But, I am sure it will be awesome. I will be able to see stuff in person that I have only been able to see on TV or the Internet,” he said.

Burmeister’s training began with simple concepts and they were added to as the training progressed, according to Best. During the training, Burmeister accesses the water via a ramp that leads into the pool.

Burmeister had to learn things that all divers do, but he had to do so without the use of his feet. He had to learn how to get equipment on in the water and share air with others.

One issue Burmeister has that other divers may not is balance



Former Army National Guard Sgt. Erik Burmeister, top left, takes instruction from Rich Best, center, and Phillip Vendryes of Sunken Treasure Scuba Center at the Eastern Lycoming YMCA pool last Wednesday.

in the water. He needs more weights on one side than the other. These are slight changes that needed to be perfected on his last dive before he left for certification. “The challenge for Erik is getting his balance absolutely perfect. We put weight on the divers to make them neutral in the water so they don’t float, nor do they sink. One side of his body has more muscle mass and therefore that sinks better. Once the weights are good, he can balance under

water pretty good,” Best said. Burmeister also has webbed gloves to navigate more easily through the water because he is unable to use fins that normally would go on his feet.

About a dozen other people accompanied Burmeister on his journey. His travel companions included six other physically injured veterans.

The trip will run until this Saturday. The diving certifications were scheduled over the weekend. □



Carnival confirmed that from January 3, 2010, St Maarten will replace Antigua on the Carnival Victory’s seven-day southern Caribbean itinerary. However, the twin-island nation will remain on the Carnival Freedom’s eight-day southern Caribbean cruises from Fort Lauderdale.

ST JOHN’S, Antigua, - Antigua and Barbuda’s Tourism Minister and other senior industry officials will meet tomorrow with the principals of Carnival Cruise Lines, following a decision by the company to drop the island from the itinerary of one of its vessels - a move that could result in the country losing out on EC\$15 million (US\$5.6 million) in income every year. Carnival confirmed that from January 3, 2010, St Maarten will replace Antigua on the Carnival Victory’s seven-day

southern Caribbean itinerary. However, the twin-island nation will remain on the Carnival Freedom’s eight-day southern Caribbean cruises from Fort Lauderdale.

“This was a decision we had been contemplating for quite some time. We have not modified this southern Caribbean itinerary in the past four years and had a desire to incorporate a new port of call,” the company said in a statement.

“At the same time, St Maarten holds very strong appeal from

Antigua, Carnival Cruise Line to talk following vessel pullout

a tourism standpoint and we have made a commitment to St Maarten to support the extensive port and infrastructure development currently underway there.”

A statement issued by the Ministry of Tourism yesterday said Antigua and Barbuda has also made progress and it was therefore unclear why it would lose out to St Maarten.

“Argumentatively, Antigua has done such like infrastructural adjustments, and there have been no preceding complaints concerning product delivery in Antigua that would prompt such rapid action, on behalf of the cruise line whose itineraries are published in advance,” it said.

“Upon hearing of the intended pull-out, top cruise and tourism officials sought to have an audience with the principals of Carnival Cruise Lines and the said meeting is set to take place this Thursday in Miami Florida, where the cruise line is based.”

The contingent, led by Tourism

Minister John Maginley, will also include Antigua Pier Group representative, Conrad Pole, and Antigua and Barbuda Cruise Tourism Association (ACCTA) President Nathan Dundas. Despite what Carnival has given as the reason for the pullout, it is generally believed that the move is directly linked to the confrontation between a local taxi driver and six cruise passengers, who arrived on the Carnival Victory earlier this month. That dispute climaxed in a police station brawl and is now engaging the attention of the courts. “It is the hope of tourism stakeholders that a swift and convivial judgment will bring an end to this latest saga that has placed Antigua and Barbuda’s tourism industry into disarray,” the ministry said. The assault case has attracted the attention of international media. The ABCTA said it was very

concerned about the negative impact that the matter was having on the country.

“The main concern is the fact that the name and reputation of Antigua and Barbuda has already been negatively impacted by the international news media that has been following this story,” it said. “Along with the image and reputation of our country, this dropping of Antigua and Barbuda by this vessel will have a major financial impact on our economy. We are estimating that based on the present annual revenues incurred from this ship alone we stand to lose approximately EC\$15 million a year or US\$5.6 million, and this is a conservative figure.” The ABCTA, other tourism stakeholders and the Tourism Ministry have been holding a series of meetings in preparation for tomorrow’s talks with Carnival Cruise Line officials. □

BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

Stocks rebound from slide on manufacturing data



By HEVA M. AUGSTOMS
and TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writers

NEWYORK—Investors shook off their disappointment with a weak regional economic report Wednesday and resumed buying stocks on the final day of a stellar quarter.

The Dow Jones industrials initially fell more than 100 points after the Chicago Purchasing Managers Index came in weaker than expected. But by early afternoon, buyers emerged and lifted stocks, sending the Dow up about 20. It was fitting that on the last day of the quarter, the market followed a pattern seen throughout this year's rally. When bad news hits the market, reminding investors of the economy's fragility, stocks slide. But within a few days, or even the same day, they start to recover as investors seem to grab hold of the fact that no one expects the recovery, or stocks, to have an unbroken path upward.

The Chicago PMI fell to 46.1 in September rather than rising to the 52 that economists expected. The index, considered a precursor to the national Institute for Supply Management index to be released on Thursday, pointed to a Midwestern manufacturing industry than is weaker than had been

expected.

The market had more encouraging news earlier, an upward revision in the Commerce Department's reading for the second-quarter gross domestic product. The government said the GDP, the broadest measure of the economy, sank at a pace of just 0.7 percent in the spring. The new reading was better than the annualized 1.1 percent drop that economists were predicting.

But the Chicago PMI data were fresher, and therefore more troubling, than the GDP. And it reminded investors that the economy still has major obstacles to be overcome before a solid recovery can occur.

In early afternoon trading, the Dow rose 19.96, or 0.2 percent, to 9,762.16. The index had been down nearly 134 points at its low of the day.

The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 2.60, or 0.3 percent, to 1,063.21. The Nasdaq composite index rose 12.67, or 0.6 percent, to 2,136.71.

Advancing stocks narrowly outpaced those that fell on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume came to 652.9 million shares compared with 562.3 million shares traded at the same point Tuesday.

The market was uneasy

ahead of Friday's September employment report from the Labor Department.

A snapshot Wednesday on employment showed some modest improvement in the labor market. The ADP National Employment Report found that private sector employment fell by 254,000 in September following a revised loss of 277,000 jobs in August. It was the fewest jobs lost since July 2008.

Traders are waiting to see whether there will be a significant drop in the number of jobs cut nationwide during September. Investors also are concerned about the unemployment rate. Economists predict the unemployment rate rose to 9.8 percent in September from 9.7 percent a month earlier.

The market could have trouble continuing its advance if economic reports don't boost optimism. Steve Hagenbuckle, managing principal for TerraCap Partners in New York, expects that corporate earnings will likely exceed expectations again in the third quarter and help boost the market. "The corporate numbers will continue to be met or exceeded so I think we'll continue to run up," he said. "I don't think this is a major pullback." The stock market has had a robust third quarter as investors have been betting on an economic recovery. However, as the Chicago PMI showed, there are still many vulnerable spots in the economy that can stall the rally that began in March. Through Tuesday, the benchmark S&P 500 index gained 56.8 percent since hitting a 12-year low in March, and for the quarter, the S&P 500 and Dow were both up more than 15 percent. □



The euro advanced on the dollar Wednesday but gains were limited following reports from the United States giving a mixed picture of the US economic recovery.

(AFP/File/Shawn Thew)

Euro gains pared on US data

LONDON (AFP) – The euro advanced on the dollar Wednesday but gains were limited following reports from the United States giving a mixed picture of the US economic recovery.

The single European currency in late-day trade was at 1.4632 dollars against 1.4581 late Tuesday in New York.

The dollar was meanwhile trading at 89.52 yen, down from 90.10 on Tuesday.

Market sentiment was affected by data from the United States showing a sharp slowdown in US economic contraction as well as worse-than-expected employment figures.

Revised data revealed a smaller-than-expected 0.7 percent pace of output decline.

That figure was better than last month's estimate of a 1.0 percent drop and stronger than the average estimate of private economists for a 1.2 percent annualised rate of decline.

The report appeared to confirm that the world's biggest economy was emerging from its long recession and rebounding from a hefty 6.4 percent tumble in the first quarter of 2009.

The latest report "sets the stage for an improved economic outlook for the rest of 2009 and throughout 2010," said Aaron Smith at Moody's Economy.com.

"The downturn appears to have concluded this summer, and the economy is on track to grow for the first time in more than a year in the third quarter," he said.

"The initial phase of growth is being driven by rapid recoveries in housing and manufacturing, diminishing drags from equipment spending and non-residential construction, and government support."

For currency investors the growth results stood in contrast to a report from payrolls firm ADP that the US private sector shed 254,000 jobs in September.

The figure was the smallest number of job losses in more than a year for nonfarm private employment but higher than the 200,000 expected by most analysts.

Investor morale was also unsettled by news that manufacturing activity in the Chicago area unexpectedly fell into negative territory in September after having stabilised in August.

Taken together the reports released Wednesday raised questions about US economic prospects and prompted traders to begin to favor the safe-haven dollar over the euro in late trade.

In London on Wednesday, the euro was changing hands at 1.4632 dollars against 1.4581 dollars late on Tuesday, 130.87 yen (131.40), 0.9146 pounds (0.9137) and 1.5185 Swiss francs (1.5111).

The dollar stood at 89.52 yen (90.10) and 1.0386 Swiss francs (1.0362).

The pound was at 1.5988 dollars (1.5956). □

Travolta testifies Bahamas medic threatened him



US actor John Travolta, left, and his wife Kelly Preston leave the court building in Nassau, Bahamas, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2009. Travolta said Wednesday he tried desperately to save the life of his seizure-prone son as he testified in the trial of two people accused of trying to blackmail him.

(AP Photo/Tim Ayleen)

NASSAU, Bahamas — John Travolta has told a court in the Bahamas that a local paramedic threatened to sell

stories to the news media suggesting the movie star was at fault in the death of his 16-year-old son.

Travolta testified that the paramedic who is now on trial for extortion demanded \$25 million from the actor.

He was testifying in the second week of the trial of paramedic Tarino Lightbourne and attorney Pleasant Bridgewater.

Travolta told the court that Lightbourne had a consent document that the actor signed when medics came to the aid of his son. He says the medic threatened to use the document to “imply that the death of my son was intentional and I was culpable in some way.”

Lightbourne and Bridgewater have pleaded innocent. □

Jackson estate sues foundation over name

By ANTHONY McCARTNEY, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — Michael Jackson's estate on Tuesday sued a foundation that bears the name of one of his most famous songs, “Heal the World.”

The federal court lawsuit claims the Heal the World Foundation is improperly using trademarks and Web sites to create the impression they were approved by Jackson to solicit donations.

The current administrators of

Jackson's estate — attorney John Branca and music executive John McClain — have a probate court's authority to protect Jackson's image and likeness and prevent sales of unauthorized merchandise. They have negotiated deals for official Jackson merchandise, including a coffee table book, trading cards and calendars. The lawsuit claims the Heal the World Foundation had no relationship with Jackson or his family. □



Wyclef, Timberland team up on eco-friendly boots

By HOLLY RAMER, Associated Press Writer

CONCORD, N.H. — Wyclef Jean and The Timberland Co. are teaming up to sell eco-friendly footwear and support reforestation of the singer's native Haiti.

Jean, who achieved fame with The Fugees before going solo, collaborated with the New Hampshire-based footwear and apparel company on a 16-boot collection going on sale in November. Timberland also will sell T-shirts designed by Haitian children, and a new line of organic shirts and hats will be sold at Jean's concerts, with a cut of the profits going to Jean's Yele Haiti foundation.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Jean says he hopes the partnership will inspire children and put a new face on his homeland. The partnership is part of Timberland's Earthkeepers program, which promotes environmental and social activism. □



FILE - In this April 22, 2009, file photo, Wyclef Jean arrives at the 26th Annual ASCAP Pop Music Awards in Los Angeles. Jean collaborated with The Timberland Co., a New Hampshire-based footwear and apparel company, to support reforestation in the singer's native Haiti and sell eco-friendly footwear.

(AP Photo/Chris Pizzello, File)



Actors Daniel Craig, left, and Hugh Jackman take their bows at the curtain call for the Broadway opening performance of ‘A Steady Rain’ on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009 in New York. ‘A Steady Rain’ stars Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman.

(AP Photo/Evan Agostini)

Jackman, Craig fare better than ‘A Steady Rain’

By MICHAEL KUCHWARA,

AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK — Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman emerged unscathed but “A Steady Rain” wasn't as lucky.

The two megastars opened on Broadway Tuesday to mostly positive notices in Keith Huff's two-character police drama, with many of the critics more critical of the play than the performers.

The AP said, “While both men, particularly Craig, acquit themselves well, they can't turn the 90-minute evening into anything more than a chance to see two big-time movie stars emoting up close in a pulpy, plot-heavy entertainment.”

The New York Times said, “Big names, little show. ‘A Steady Rain’ ... is probably best regarded as a small, wobbly pedestal on which two gods of the screen may stand in order to be worshipped.”

The New York Post described Huff's play as a “mawkish, labored, two-hander,” while The Washington Post sniffed that the production was “an opportunity squandered.”

But the (New York) Daily News was a bit more generous, calling “A Steady Rain” “a stark and modest work that's all talk and no action. It keeps you at arms length.”

Variety was even better. It called the production “riveting theater,” while Newsday said the play was “a dark, moody, small but brutal 90-minute duet ... a gorgeously acted set of monologues about moral ambiguity.”

Not that the reviews matter.

“A Steady Rain” has been doing boffo business at the box office since it began previews Sept. 10 at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre. Last week, for example, the show grossed \$1.16 million, according to its producers.

But then the play also sports the highest regular ticket price for a play (but not a musical) on Broadway. Top weekend tickets go for \$130 each, climbing to \$140 Thanksgiving weekend and for Dec. 4-6, the final weekend of the production's 12-week limited engagement. And premium seats (the best in the house), range from \$226.50 up to an eye-popping \$376.50, depending on the performance.

So far, Jackman and Craig have bested another marquee name in the box-office department: Jude Law, starring in “Hamlet.” The Shakespeare warhorse took in \$632,206 during last week's preview performances, filling about 70 percent of the seats at the Broadhurst Theatre. “Hamlet” opens Oct. 6. □

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Peru's Fujimori sentenced to 6 yrs for corruption

LIMA, Peru – A court has sentenced Alberto Fujimori to six years in prison after the jailed former president pleaded guilty to authorizing wiretaps and bribes to politicians, journalists and businessmen.

The 71-year-old politician already faces the prospect of spending the rest of his life in prison after a special Supreme Court panel sentenced him to 25 years for crimes against humanity for

authorizing military death squads.

Asked if he accepted the sentence Wednesday, the ailing Fujimori stood up and said “I move to nullify.”

The court has convicted Fujimori of ordering his former spy chief to secretly wiretap 28 politicians, journalists and businessmen; bribe 13 congressmen, and buy off a TV station and a newspaper editorial board. □



Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori arrives for a fourth sentencing during his trial on the outskirts of Lima, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009. The court sentenced Fujimori to six years in prison after the jailed former president pleaded guilty to authorizing wiretaps and bribes to politicians, journalists and businessmen. Fujimori, 71, already faces the prospect of spending the rest of his life in prison after a special Supreme Court panel sentenced him to 25 years for crimes against humanity for authorizing military death squads.

(AP Photo/Henry Luna)



An abandoned vehicle is shown shortly after a tsunami warning was issued in American Samoa on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009. Towering tsunami waves spawned by a powerful earthquake swept ashore on Samoa and American Samoa early Tuesday, flattening villages, killing at least 34 people and leaving dozens of workers missing at devastated National Park Service facilities.

(AP Photo/Fili Sagapolutele)

Aid flows to tsunami-hit Samoas as deaths hit 119

By KENI LESA and FILI SAGAPOLUTELE, Associated Press Writers
APIA, Samoa – Disaster officials rushed food, medicine and a temporary morgue to the Samoas on Wednesday after a powerful earthquake unleashed a tsunami that flattened villages and swept cars and people out to sea. At least 119 people were killed. Survivors fled to higher ground on the South Pacific islands after the

magnitude 8.0 quake struck at 6:48 a.m. local time (1:48 p.m. EDT; 1748 GMT) Tuesday. Four tsunami waves 15 to 20 feet (4 to 6 meters) high roared ashore on American Samoa about 15 minutes after the quake, reaching up to a mile (1.5 kilometers) inland, Mike Reynolds, superintendent of the National Park of American Samoa, was quoted as saying by a parks service spokeswoman. Military transports carrying

medical personnel, food, water, medicines and other supplies were headed to the stricken islands. “Right now, we’re focused on bringing in the assistance for people that have been injured, and for the immediate needs of the tens of thousands of survivors down there,” Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate said.

Continued on Next Page

Biden welcomes son home from guard service in Iraq



Capt. Beau Biden kisses his son Hunter, 3, after an official welcome home ceremony for members of the Delaware Army National Guard 261st Signal Brigade, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009, in Dover, Del. Biden, the son of Vice president Joe Biden, is also the Attorney General of Delaware.

(AP Photo/Rob Carr)

By RANDALL CHASE, Associated Press Writer

DOVER, Del. – Vice President Joe Biden has given his eldest son a warm welcome home to Delaware after a yearlong deployment to Iraq with an Army National Guard unit. A crowd of about 1,000 people gathered Wednesday in front of the state capitol building in Dover to greet the 261st Signal Brigade.

Biden's son Beau is a captain in the unit and also Delaware's attorney general.

The younger Biden must now turn his attention to his civilian job, as well as a possible bid for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by his dad last year. The seat is now held by longtime Biden confidant Ted Kaufman, who has said he will not run for the seat in 2010. □



People walk among a scene of devastation following a powerful earthquake in Pago Pago village, on American Samoa Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009. The quake in the South Pacific hurled massive tsunami waves at the shores of Samoa and American Samoa, flattening villages and sweeping cars and people back out to sea while leaving scores dead and dozens missing.

(AP Photo/SamoaNews.com, Ausage Fausia)

DEATH TOLL RISE

Continued from Page B1

A Coast Guard C-130 plane loaded with aid and carrying FEMA officials was headed from Hawaii to American Samoa's capital of Pago Pago, where debris had been cleared from runways to allow for emergency planes to land. Some islanders had enough

warning to flee the tsunami. But a warning system run by the Global Security and Crisis Management Unit failed to evaluate the tsunami's impact in real time because of a hardware failure.

New Zealand's acting Prime Minister Bill English said tents, stretchers, the temporary morgue and a body

identification team were sent to Samoa on a Hercules transport plane after a "specific request" from local officials, who are "are very concerned about the growing death toll."

The quake was centered about 120 miles south of the islands of Samoa, which has about 220,000 people, and American Samoa, a U.S. territory of 65,000. Another strong underwater earthquake rocked western Indonesia on Wednesday, less than 24 hours after the Samoan quake, briefly triggering a tsunami alert for countries along the Indian Ocean. The 7.6-magnitude quake toppled buildings, cut power and triggered a landslide on Sumatra island, and at least 75 people were reported killed. Experts said the seismic events were not related. The Samoan capital, Apia, was virtually deserted by afternoon, with schools and businesses closed. Hours after the waves struck, sirens rang out with another tsunami alert and panicked residents headed for higher ground again, although there was no

indication of a new quake.

In Pago Pago, the streets and fields were filled with debris, mud, overturned cars and several boats as a massive cleanup effort stretched into the night. Several buildings in the city — just a few feet above sea level — were flattened. Power was expected to be out in some areas for up to a month. Water service has been restored to many villages, but power is still out in most areas. More than 1,000 people spent the night in 15 emergency shelters.

President Barack Obama declared a major disaster for American Samoa, adding that he and his wife, Michelle, "will keep those who have lost so much in our thoughts and prayers."

Hampered by power and communications outages, officials in the South Pacific islands struggled to determine casualties and damage.

Hundreds of people bombarded American Samoa's radio stations with requests to announce the names of their missing loved ones.

Broadcasters urged listeners to contact their families immediately.

Samoa National Disaster Management committee member Filomina Nelson told New Zealand's National Radio the number of dead in her country had reached 83 — mostly elderly and young children. At least 30 people were killed on American Samoa, Gov. Togiola Tulafono said. The overall death toll was expected to rise as more stricken areas are searched.

Authorities in Tonga, southwest of the Samoas, confirmed at least six dead and four missing, according to English.

"I don't think anybody is going to be spared in this disaster," said Tulafono, who was in Hawaii for a conference. He added that a member of his extended family was among the dead.

Joey Cummings of radiostation 93KHJ in Pago Pago told the BBC that he watched from a balcony as a 15-foot tsunami wave struck, and "the air was filled with screams." □



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UN fires top US official at UN in Afghanistan

By EDITH M. LEDERER,
 Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS — Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon fired the top American official at the U.N. mission in Afghanistan on Wednesday after a widely publicized dispute with his boss over how to deal with widespread fraud charges in the country's presidential election.

U.N. spokeswoman Michele Montas said in a statement that Ban decided to recall Peter Galbraith and end his appointment as the U.N.'s deputy special representative. Diplomats said Galbraith disagreed with the head of the U.N. mission, Kai Eide, over how the U.N. should handle the disputed election.

The secretary-general reaffirmed "his full support for Eide" and made his decision "in the best interest of the mission," Montas said.

Neither Galbraith nor Eide, a Norwegian diplomat, have offered details of the disagreement, though Eide has confirmed that the two split over election issues.

The delay in final results from the Aug. 20 vote has led to fears of a power vacuum in the Afghan government that could endure until spring, even as Taliban violence against U.S. and NATO soldiers and Afghan civilians continues to rise.

Preliminary results show President Hamid Karzai won a majority, with former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah in second place. But proclamation of a winner has been delayed pending a partial recount following allegations of widespread fraud.

Abdullah told the Associated Press in a telephone interview Wednesday in Kabul that Galbraith's removal called into question the impartiality of the U.N. mission and the credibility of the election process.

Galbraith "had been in favor of vigorous investigations

into fraud," he said, and his departure "raises questions about the seriousness of the international institutions in the process" of discerning fraud in the election.

Abdullah said he still supports the U.N.-backed fraud investigation panel but worries about "deliberate delays." Galbraith was pushing for things to move quickly and pushed for ballot papers to be ordered for a runoff, if needed, he said.

"When somebody who is considered to be serious about this issue is being fired, then the impression it leaves with the people will not be good," Abdullah said. "While still I want to be hopeful about the fraud investigation and the role of ECC (Electoral Complaints Commission) in it, it's not a good sign."

The U.N. Mission in Afghanistan, known as UNAMA, had a mandate to support the Afghan government in conducting the Aug. 20 elections. It also has a mandate to lead international civilian efforts to provide aid, promote reconstruction, combat corruption, help improve civilian-military cooperation, and expand the U.N. presence throughout the country to promote good

governance and the rule of law.

Britain's U.N. Ambassador John Sawers said: "We believe Peter Galbraith brought energy and ideas, but there has to be a single leadership on the main issues of policy."

Sawers said Galbraith and Eide had a policy dispute on UNAMA's post-election role. "I think it's mainly a question of whether it was the U.N.'s role to determine the validity or otherwise of the election and the results of that election," he said.

"In fact, Mr. Eide is correct in saying that those responsibilities rest with other bodies — the Independent Election Commission and the Election Complaints Commission. They are independent bodies," Sawers said.

Galbraith oversaw electoral matters for the U.N. before and after the vote. Following allegations of widespread vote-rigging, he reportedly pressed the Election Commission to conduct a wide-ranging recount.

Eide has been criticized for initially praising the election — before the full extent of the fraud became known — and saying it represented "an important achievement" for



UN chief Ban Ki-moon has dismissed Peter Galbraith -- the deputy UN special envoy to Afghanistan -- who has been involved in a row with his boss over the country's fraud-tainted election.

(AFP/DDP/File/JOERG KOCH)

the people of Afghanistan.

Asked about Galbraith's departure, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who chaired a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday, told reporters: "That's a United Nations matter."

Just a day ago on Tuesday, the secretary-general responded to a question about whether Galbraith would keep his job

and return to Afghanistan.

"He is still as deputy special representative of UNAMA," Ban replied.

Pressed on whether he would remain deputy special representative, the secretary-general said, "I think I don't need to answer for that question for anything which may happen in the future. We will have to assess the situation." □

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Health bill survives attacks — vote by week's end?



Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., left, holds up the gavel he used as speaker pro tempore when Medicare passed in 1965, during a news conference on seniors and health care reform with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of Calif., Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

By DAVID ESPO,

AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — A White House-backed overhaul of the nation's health care system weathered repeated challenges from Republican critics over taxes, abortion and more on Wednesday, and the bill's architect claimed enough votes to push it through the

Senate Finance Committee as early as week's end.

"We're coming to closure," said Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., the committee chairman, as President Barack Obama lobbied at least one wavering Democrat by phone to swing behind the measure. Baucus said, "It's clear to me we're going to get it passed,"

although he sidestepped a question about possible Republican support. Olympia Snowe of Maine is the only GOP senator whose vote is in doubt, and she has yet to tip her hand.

While she has voted with Democrats on some key tests — to allow the government to dictate the types of coverage that must be included in insurance policies, for example — she has also sided with fellow Republicans on other contentious issues.

In a reflection of the intensity on both sides of the Capitol, Democratic Rep. Alan Grayson of Florida was unrepentant after claiming the Republican plan for health care was for Americans to "die quickly." Refusing to apologize, he said, "People like elected officials with guts who say what they mean. ... I stand by what I said."

That controversy aside, House Democratic leaders struggled to reduce their legislation to the \$900 billion, 10-year cost that Obama has specified. Officials said numerous alternatives were under review to reduce subsidies that are designed to defray the cost of insurance for millions.

Passage in the Finance Committee would clear the way for debate on the Senate floor in mid-October on the bill, designed to accomplish Obama's aims of expanding access to insurance as well as slowing the rate of growth in health care spending overall. The bill includes numerous consumer protections, such as limits on co-pays and deductibles, and relies on federal subsidies to help lower-income families purchase coverage. Its cost is estimated at \$900 billion over a decade. While the legislation would not allow the government to sell insurance in competition with private companies, as Obama and numerous Democrats would like, the White House was working to make sure that some version cleared committee. Sen. Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, a Democrat who has been outspoken in his criticism of features of the bill, said Obama called him to seek support.

"I was noncommittal," the senator said.

The committee met as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada announced the full Senate would begin debate on health care legislation the week of the Columbus Day holiday. Initial action is expected to be slow, consumed largely with parliamentary maneuvers in which Democrats try to set the stage for passage and Republicans erect a 60-vote hurdle as a test vote.

The precise details of the bill brought to the Senate floor will be determined by Reid, in consultation from the White House and Democratic leaders of the Finance Committee and the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Democrats on the Finance Committee worked behind the scenes on possible last-minute changes to make insurance more affordable and accessible for millions who now lack it. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., floated a proposal modeled after a system in her home state. It would allow creation of a state-run insurance program for lower-income Americans that supporters said would produce lower-cost coverage as the state used its purchasing power to negotiate fees with doctors and other providers.

Inside the committee, the only significant change approved Wednesday was a proposal by Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., to shield seniors from the impact of a tax increase in the bill for individuals and families seeking to exclude certain medical expenses from their income.

Under current law, taxpayers who itemize their deductions are permitted to escape taxes on health costs that exceed 7.5 percent of their adjusted gross income.

Baucus' legislation would raise the threshold to 10 percent, but on a vote of 14-9, Nelson succeeded in returning it to 7.5 percent for taxpayers age 65 and over.

Moments later, Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona sought to give younger taxpayers the same break, but his proposal failed, also on a vote of 14-9.

It was one in a string of futile Republican attempts

to reshape the legislation by inserting stronger anti-abortion provisions and require photo identification to prove eligibility for benefits under federal health programs for the poor. Attempts to kill fees on health industry providers also failed, along party lines, after Baucus said the result would be to wipe out a key source of funds for the expansion of insurance.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, argued that provisions already in the bill to restrict federal funding for abortions needed to be tightened to guarantee they would be ironclad. He said his goal was to incorporate the restrictions into law, "so we don't have to go through it every year."

In recent years, Congress has prohibited federal funding for most abortions through annual spending bills, and Hatch's proposal would have eliminated the need for those yearly votes.

But abortion rights supporters said the proposal would have expanded the current restrictions, and could deny coverage for abortions to working women signing up for coverage through private plans.

Its approval would be a "poison pill ... if it is hung on this legislation," said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

The committee also rejected a proposal from Hatch to strengthen existing legal protections for health care professionals who refuse to perform abortions or other procedures on grounds of moral or religious objections.

Both failed on nearly party line votes of 13-10, with Snowe siding with most Democrats in opposition, and Kent Conrad, D-N.D., voting with Hatch.

Republicans also failed in attempts to require applicants for federal health programs to furnish photo identification as proof of eligibility, an issue that dealt with illegal immigrants. Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said the goal was to prevent fraud, but Bob Menendez, D-N.J., objected that the proposals went beyond a required birth certificate required as proof of citizenship. □



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Police: Okla. mom accused of abuse has NYC record

By SEAN MURPHY,
Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma mother accused of locking up her 14-year-old boy in a closet for 4 1/2 years was previously convicted in the death of her 2-year-old child in New York, investigators said Wednesday.

Oklahoma City police Sgt. Gary Knight said detectives were able to confirm that LaRhonda McCall was arrested in New York in 1995 in connection with the death of her daughter. At the time she went by the name LaRhonda Pressley, he said.

Bronx district attorney's office spokesman Steven Reed said the mother pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter in 1996 and was sentenced to jail and probation. Investigators' interviews with family members confirmed the conviction, Knight said. It isn't immediately clear how much jail time she served, and further details about the case were not immediately known. The 14-year-old boy told police his mother moved to Oklahoma after she was released from jail, and that after living with a cousin in New Jersey, he was sent to live with her more than four years ago, according to a police report.

McCall, 37, and her friend, Steve Hamilton, 38, have been arrested on 20 complaints each of child abuse and child neglect in the Oklahoma City case. Both remained jailed Wednesday on \$400,000 bond. Neither has been formally charged, and jail officials were not sure if either has an attorney. No one answered the phone at McCall's home Wednesday.

Police began their investigation Friday after the boy, malnourished and covered with scars and bruises, wandered up to a National Guard armory about a mile and a half from his home and told security guards there he escaped and needed police.

The teen told police he spent most of the last 4 1/2 years

locked inside bedroom closets at various apartments where the family lived, and never attended school or received medical attention, authorities said.

An affidavit released Wednesday said McCall and Hamilton admitted to repeatedly beating the boy and locking him in a closet for days. McCall told investigators she choked the teen at least once and used a belt, ruler and broom handle to beat him numerous times over the last three years, according to the affidavit.

Hamilton also told police he also beat the teen, identified as "B.M.," multiple times with a belt and wire cable "when he got out of line," and once struck him in the head with a tire jack, the affidavit said.

"Steve advised he saw B.M. locked in the closet on at least 27 different occasions," the affidavit said.

Managers of the last two apartment complexes where the family most recently lived said they occasionally saw some of McCall's seven other children but never saw the teenage boy. Karen Gilleland, manager of the Hillcrest Apartments in south Oklahoma City, said after McCall was evicted for unpaid bills in August, a hole filled with human waste was found in the wall of a closet in their apartment unit.

Gilleland said she never realized McCall had more than seven children and that whenever Gilleland had been in the apartment during the several months the family lived there, the door to the bedroom where the soiled closet was closed. Dea Dollins, apartment manager at Grand Boulevard Town Homes where the family currently lives, said she and maintenance workers had been in the unit as recently as Friday, but the bedroom doors were closed.

"I would see, on occasion, some girls would walk in line to the laundromat and go back to the apartment," Dollins said. "I never saw a teenage boy."

All seven of McCall's minor children, including the 14-year-old boy, have been taken into custody of the Department of Human Services. McCall also has an 18-year-old daughter, who continues to live in the family's latest apartment.

Meanwhile, First Assistant District Attorney Scott Rowland said police have not yet completed their investigation, which must be presented to prosecutors before formal charges can be filed. □

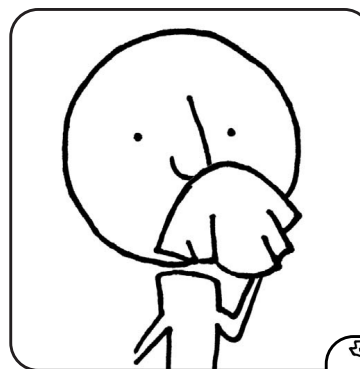


In this undated police mug photo provided by the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office, Larhonda Marie McCall, 37, is shown in Oklahoma City. McCall and Steve Vern Hamilton, 38, were arrested Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009 on complaints of child abuse and child neglect after a 14-year-old boy told police he escaped from McCall's home, where he said he'd been kept for years, mostly locked inside a bedroom closet.

(AP Photo/Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office)

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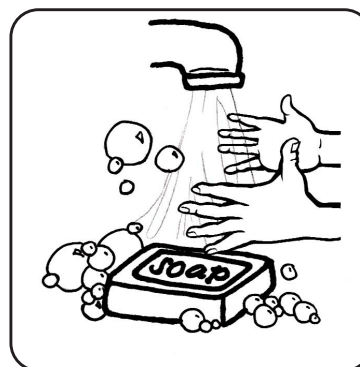
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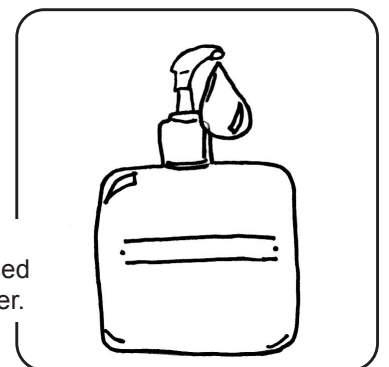
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Major Sudan parties threaten election boycott



Sudanese Islamist opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi (R) attends the Juba conference in the capital of semi-autonomous South Sudan on September 27, 2009. Around 20 Sudanese political parties threatened on Wednesday to boycott next year's elections, the first in more than two decades, unless President Omar al-Beshir implements reforms.

(AFP/File/Ashraf Shazly)

by Guillaume Lavallee
JUBA, Sudan (AFP) – Around 20 Sudanese political parties threatened on Wednesday to boycott next year's elections, the first in more than two decades, unless President Omar al-Beshir implements

reforms. Meeting in the capital of semi-autonomous South Sudan, they called for "amendment of all laws related to freedoms and democratic transformation" to bring them into line with the interim constitution in Africa's

largest nation. In 2005, after 21 years of north-south civil war, the south's Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and Beshir's National Congress Party (NCP) signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement including the interim constitution. But the parties say many laws that breach the constitution are still in force, in particular ones relating to individual liberty and the powers of the secret service. In the "Juba declaration for dialogue and national consensus," agreed after five days of talks, the leaders said they will only take part in planned presidential, parliamentary and regional elections if the relevant laws are amended by the end of November. The elections, scheduled for April, would be the first since 1986.

The declaration also demanded an agreement on the disputed results of a census on which electoral constituencies are to be based and the end of the conflict in the western region of Darfur as further conditions for taking part in the polls. "It is a victory. For the first time in our history we have a national consensus," Pagan Amum, SPLM secretary general, told AFP. Politicians who participated in the conference included SPLM leader Salva Kiir, former prime minister Sadek al-Mahdi of the Umma party, Islamist opposition figure Hassan al-Turabi and Communist party head Ibrahim Nugud. Beshir, who is the target of an international arrest warrant for alleged war crimes, boycotted the conference. The party leaders also agreed other joint demands without making implementation of

them a condition for the leaders supporting the elections. The declaration called on Beshir to establish a "Truth and Reconciliation Committee to investigate all violations and atrocities against the rights of groups and individuals" since Sudan became independent in 1956. The International Criminal Court wants to try Beshir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur, where the United Nations says 300,000 people have died and 2.7 million have fled their homes because of the fighting. Khartoum says 10,000 have died. The parties at the Juba conference said they "affirm zero tolerance to impunity from prosecution" and want "those who have committed war crimes ... brought to book before independent judiciary." □



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R	THE INFORMANT	daily: 6:00 matinee: 1:00	8:30 late show: 11:00	NEW
R	MANAGEMENT	daily: 7:00 matinee:	9:15 late show: 11:30	
R	JENNIFER'S BODY	daily: 5:30 matinee: 1:00	7:45 late show: 12:15	
PG	FAME	daily: 4:00 matinee: 1:30	6:15 late show: 11:15	
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4	daily: 8:00 matinee:	10:00 12:00	3D
PG	ALIENS IN THE ATTIC	daily: 12:15 matinee: 2:30	4:45 late show:	
R	WHITEOUT	daily: 5:15 matinee: 12:45	7:30 late show: 12:00	
PG	CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS	daily: 4:00 matinee: 12:00	6:00 late show:	3D

AT PASEO HERENCIA

R	ZOMBIELAND	daily: 4:00 matinee: 12:00	6:00 2:00	8:00 late show: 12:00	NEW
PG-13	SURROGATES	daily: 1:15 matinee: 3:45	6:30 late show: 11:15	8:45	NEW
R	JENNIFER'S BODY	daily: 12:15 matinee: 2:30	4:45 late show: 11:30	7:00 9:15	
PG-13	TYLER PERRY'S I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF	daily: 8:30 matinee:	late show: 11:15		
PG	CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS	daily: 4:15 matinee: 12:15	6:15 late show:		3D
PG-13	G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF THE COBRA	daily: 12:30 matinee: 3:30	6:00 late show:		
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4	daily: 8:15 matinee:	10:00 late show: 11:45		3D
R	WHITEOUT	daily: 12:45 matinee:	5:15 late show: 12:00	7:30 9:45	

Indonesia quake kills 75, thousands trapped

By NINIEK KARMINI,
Associated Press Writer

JAKARTA, Indonesia — A powerful earthquake rocked western Indonesia Wednesday, trapping thousands under collapsed buildings — including two hospitals — and triggering landslides. At least 75 people were killed on Sumatra island and the death toll was expected to climb sharply.

The magnitude 7.6 quake struck at 5:15 p.m. local time (1015GMT, 6:15 a.m. EDT), just off the coast of Padang city the U.S. Geological Survey said. It was along the same fault line that spawned the massive 2004 Asian tsunami that killed more than 230,000 people in a dozen countries.

A tsunami warning for countries along the Indian Ocean was issued, and panicked residents fled to

higher ground fearing giant waves. The warning was lifted about an hour later.

When the quake struck, the ground was shaking so hard that people sat down on the streets to avoid falling over, footage shot in Padang and broadcast by local TVOne network showed.

Children screamed as residents tried to put out fires started in the quake. Thousands fled the coast in cars and motorbikes, honking horns.

Initial reports received by the government said 75 people were killed, but the real number is “definitely higher than that,” Vice President Jusuf Kalla told reporters in the capital, Jakarta.

“It’s hard to tell because there is heavy rain and a blackout,” he said. Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari told MetroTV that a mall and two hospitals



A man stands in front of a collapsed building after an earthquake hit Padang, on Indonesia's Sumatra island September 30, 2009. A 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck off the city of Padang on Indonesia's Sumatra island on Wednesday, killing at least 75 people and trapping thousands under rubble, officials said.

REUTERS/Muhammad Fitrah/Singalang Newspaper (INDONESIA DISASTER ENVIRONMENT)

EU report: Georgian attack started war with Russia

By RAF CASERT
and DOUGLAS BIRCH,
Associated Press Writers

BRUSSELS — Georgia and Russia both claimed to find vindication in Wednesday's independent report on the causes of their 2008 war, but neither seemed likely to be able to take the moral high ground because of its blunt judgments.

The EU-sponsored report supports Russia's insistence that Georgia launched the short but intense war with an indiscriminate rocket and artillery barrage on the separatist capital of South Ossetia — an act the commission said was not justifiable under international law.

Georgia can find support for its claim that Russia taunted and provoked it for years before the assault, then responded with disproportionate force, sending armored vehicles deep into undisputed Georgian territory.

Russia's retaliation went “far beyond the reasonable limits of defense,” the report said, rejecting claims the country was trying to prevent genocide with its invasion of its southern neighbor, a former Soviet nation with fervent hopes of joining the EU and NATO.

The beginnings of the July 2008 war had been murky, its aftermath contentious.

It ended in less than a week with Russia crushing Georgia's army and driving its troops out of the separatist Georgian region of South Ossetia and away from the borders of another such region, Abkhazia.

Since then, Russia has recognized both

regions as independent countries. But among U.N.-member countries, only Nicaragua and Venezuela have followed suit. Russia continues to keep thousands of troops in the regions, which have blocked EU monitors from operating there.

The findings of the independent commission, led by Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini and released Wednesday in Brussels, were based on the work of 30 European military, legal and history experts. Its conclusions are critical to the hopes of both Russia and Georgia.

Overall, Russia seems to have benefited more than Georgia from the report, if only because in the aftermath of the fighting Georgia was viewed in the West as the underdog, a victim of naked aggression.

Russia's EU envoy Vladimir Chizhov said in a statement Wednesday the commission had provided “an unequivocal answer to the main question of ‘Who started the war?’” He said the findings should encourage “those leaders who have been hesitant” to blame Georgia to reconsider.

But he rejected the notion that Russia responded with disproportionate force. “Russia's reaction was quite proportional, swift and to the point,” he said.

The Russian foreign ministry said in its own statement Wednesday that the Tagliavini commission report “clearly points at the countries which armed and trained the Georgian army,” a thinly veiled criticism of Ukraine and, especially, the United States. □

had collapsed in Padang — a sprawling low-lying city in Western Sumatra province of around 900,000 people that geologists have warned could be vulnerable to a massive quake or tsunami.

“This is a high-scale disaster, more powerful than the earthquake in Yogyakarta in 2006 when more than 3,000 people died,” Supari said, referring to a major city on the main island of Java.

Rustam Pakaya, head of the Health Ministry's crisis center, said “thousands of people are trapped under the collapsed houses.” A field hospital was being prepared to assist the injured and medical teams were on the way from neighboring provinces, he said. “Many buildings are badly damaged, including hotels and mosques,” said Wandono, an official at Meteorology and Geophysics Agency in Jakarta, citing reports from residents.

Footage from Padang showed flattened buildings, the foot of one person sticking out from beneath the debris.

“The earthquake was very strong,” said Kasmianti, who lives on the coast near to the epicenter. “People ran to high ground. Houses and buildings were badly damaged.”

“I was outside, so I am safe, but my children at home were

injured,” she said before her cell phone went dead.

TV One said the quake triggered landslides that cut all roads to Padang. Power and telecommunications were also cut. Fire also broke out in buildings on a road to the city, officials said.

“I want to know what happened to my sister and her husband,” said Fitra Jaya, who owns a house in downtown Padang and was in Jakarta when the quake struck. “I tried to call my family there, but I could not reach anyone at all.”

Wednesday's quake came a day after a quake with a magnitude of between 8.0 and 8.3 in the South Pacific hurled a massive tsunami at the shores of Samoa and American Samoa, flattening villages and leaving at least 99 dead and dozens missing.

The epicenter of Wednesday's temblor off Indonesia lies several thousand miles (kilometers) to the west, on the other side of Australia.

The shaking could be felt in high buildings in Jakarta, several hundred miles (kilometers) away. It was also felt in neighboring Singapore and Malaysia.

Padang was badly hit by an 8.4 magnitude quake in September 2007, when dozens of people died and several large buildings collapsed. □

Honduran power brokers pushing for end to crisis



A woman, using a megaphone, gestures in front of police officers and soldiers as she demonstrates in support of Honduras' ousted President Manuel Zelaya in Tegucigalpa, Tuesday, Sept 29, 2009. Gen. Romeo Vasquez, who oversaw the ouster of Zelaya in June, implored all sectors of Honduran society to join in resolving the country's deepening crisis.

(AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)

By MARK STEVENSON,
Associated Press Writer
TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Business and political leaders who backed the coup overthrowing President Manuel Zelaya now are considering the unthinkable: returning him to office with limited powers. The reversal, and Zelaya's decision to consider it, reflect the growing desperation to resolve a three-month standoff that has turned this Central American country upside down.

John Biehl, special adviser to the Organization of American States, said Wednesday he sensed some movement toward talks. "The moment has arrived for tempers to cool and reason to reign, and that's when errors will start being corrected," Biehl said. "I have found a strong willingness for dialogue," he added, noting that he had heard of proposals to return Zelaya to office until his term ends in January. The crisis sparked by the

June 28 ousting of Zelaya has paralyzed the already impoverished nation. Honduras has been bleeding millions of dollars a day, and many of its most prominent CEOs have had their visas revoked by the United States, hampering their efforts to do business.

Nations have cut aid to demand the ousted leader's reinstatement while sporadic spikes in tensions have forced the closure of airports, border crossings and factories. The final straw was the interim government's decision this week to impose a surprise emergency decree that suspended civil liberties and further damaged the administration's image at home and abroad.

Lawmakers immediately made clear Congress will revoke the emergency security crackdown if the interim government does not, said Rigoberto Chang, a congressman with the conservative National Party. The disagreement over the decree was the biggest public rift between interim President Roberto Micheletti and the Congress that put him in power after soldiers forced Zelaya into exile.

After that happened, Honduras' powerful elite told Micheletti enough is enough, and back-room negotiations began on a powerful business chamber's proposition to put Zelaya back in office with limited powers. Zelaya, who sneaked back into the country on Sept. 21, has said he was encouraged by the proposal and hoped to be in talks with its authors by Wednesday.

Its chief proponent, Adolfo Facusse, president of the National Industry Chamber that vocally supported Zelaya's ouster, suggests sending 3,000 troops from conservative-led nations to Honduras if the leftist leader is restored to office to ensure he does not overstep his limited authority. Facusse told The Associated Press that the force could be U.N. peacekeepers. He said he discussed parts of the plan with Micheletti, including a proposal to make the interim president a congressman-for-life.

Micheletti on Wednesday called parts of the plan impossible but indicated he was analyzing some points. "This involves things we cannot do, because our constitution does not permit

it," he said, referring to the presence of foreign troops or U.N. peacekeepers. "But of course we will take into consideration the points (Facusse) has expressed in his proposal, in his dream to bring peace to Hondurans."

Micheletti did not directly address the issue of reinstating Zelaya, something he has strongly opposed thus far.

The interim president is becoming increasingly isolated as pressure mounts from the nation's power brokers — including lawmakers, presidential candidates and the business elite — who are demanding a break in the stalemate.

Porfirio Lobo, a top conservative presidential contender, announced that Congress would be open to passing reforms needed to make an accord work.

"The issue is confrontation or dialogue, bloodshed or peace," said the National Party candidate, whose party holds 55 seats in the 128-seat congress.

The coup's aftermath has presented a tortuous path for presidential candidates trying to campaign ahead of the Nov. 29 elections. □

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Photo by Diane Keijzer

Venezuela asks Interpol to capture ex-president

By FABIOLA SANCHEZ,
Associated Press Writer

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuela's top prosecutor is asking Interpol to capture former President Carlos Andres Perez for violence committed during street protests two decades ago. Prosecutors will ask Interpol to issue a "red alert" for the capture of 85-year-old Perez, who lives in Miami, Attorney General Luisa Ortega told Venezuelan state television on Tuesday. She said his capture is necessary as part of investigations into the riots, known as the "Caracazo" — a play on the name of the capital that also means forceful blow.

Perez was president when the rioting broke out on Feb. 27, 1989, triggered by a hike in gasoline prices and public transportation fares. Venezuela's army was deployed to quell the unrest, leaving at least 300 dead. But rights activists say hundreds more were killed — many of them shot indiscriminately by security forces.

On this year's Feb. 27-28 anniversary, President Hugo Chavez called on authorities

to administer justice for crimes committed during the Caracazo. None of the government officials, military officers or police responsible for putting down the riots has gone to trial for the deaths.

Prosecutors said in 2007 that they were preparing to ask for Perez's extradition for crimes committed during the riots. Perez, who has lived in the U.S. for the past nine years and is reportedly suffering from health problems following a stroke, is also wanted in Venezuela on corruption charges.

In July, prosecutors charged Perez's former defense minister, retired Gen. Italo del Valle Aliegro, with ordering murders and violating international agreements during the unrest.

Last week, authorities began opening tombs to identify the remains of dozens of people killed during the riots and look for evidence against police and soldiers.

Ortega said Tuesday that the remains of 125 people have been exhumed and are being studied to identify them and determine the dates of their deaths. □

HIV spreading faster than treatment in Africa: UNAIDS

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) – New HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa are growing twice as quickly as anti-retroviral drugs are rolled out, despite a 39 percent hike in treatment access, UNAIDS said Wednesday.

The number of people receiving AIDS treatments in the region, where two-thirds of the world's HIV positive people live -- rose from 2.1 million in 2007 to 2.9 million last year.

Although the region showed the world's greatest progress in expanding AIDS treatment, new infections still outpace the numbers of people on the life-saving drugs, according to new figures from the World Health Organisation, UNAIDS and the UN Children's Fund. "The number of new infections in the region is

outpacing the number of people getting treatment by a ratio of two to one," regional UNAIDS director Mark Stirling told a press briefing in Johannesburg.

Several sub-Saharan governments were putting prevention strategies in place, but the political will to implement them still lags, he said.

More discussion was also needed around the social factors underpinning new infections, such as sexual violence and inter-generational sex between older men and young women and girls, said Stirling.

"There really needs to be a social transformation. At the moment, there is no social movement, so there is a need for a stronger political leadership and for a stronger



An HIV-positive patient receives treatment at a hospital in Nouakchott, 2006. UNAIDS said that new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa are growing twice as quickly as anti-retroviral drugs are rolled out, despite a 39 percent hike in treatment access.

(AFP/File/Mehdi Fedouach)

Kenya, Ethiopia authorities seize ivory stash

By KATHARINE HOURELD, Associated Press Writer

NAIROBI, Kenya – Authorities in Ethiopia and Kenya have seized more than 2,600 pounds (1,200 kilograms) of bloodstained ivory from about 100 illegally killed elephants at airports, the head of Kenya's Wildlife Service said Wednesday.

Julius Kipng'etich said trained dogs sniffed out a consignment of bloodstained tusks at Kenya's national airport late Tuesday. Another shipment of tusks sent by the same individual had been seized Monday at the airport in Ethiopia's capital.

Both shipments were sent as unaccompanied luggage to Bangkok. Police have launched an investigation and wildlife officials said they will continue to patrol the airport with dogs.

Elephants develop strong social bonds and can even identify family members by their bones, which individuals may return to several times over the years. Kipng'etich said he had seen groups of elephants standing around a dead family member and making a distinctive sound.

"It is as if they are crying: Please don't wear ivory. Please leave it to the elephants

for heaven's sake," he said.

Ivory trade was banned internationally in 1989 because of its devastating effect on elephant populations. Before the ban was enacted, Kenya's elephant population plummeted from 120,000 elephants in 1963 to just 12,000 a few decades later.

But after authorities realized elephants' role in boosting tourism — one of Kenya's top foreign exchange earners — they clamped down on the poachers.

The ban and subsequent enforcement slowed poaching dramatically, but in recent years it has begun to creep up, from 47 elephants killed in 2007 to 98 in 2008. So far this year, 125 already have been killed.

Kipng'etich blames the decision by signatories to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species to allow the periodic sale of confiscated ivory stockpiles to raise money for conservation. The most recent authorized sale was in 2007, when China and Japan were both allowed to buy the stockpiled ivory from Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Although Kenya was not included in the auction, Kipng'etich said he believes

it fueled demand for illegal ivory.

Iain Douglas-Hamilton, who heads the conservation group Save the Elephants, said the airport seizures were a "tremendous coup" for the Kenya Wildlife Service.

"If this proves to be native Kenyan ivory rather than ivory in transit, it's a serious confirmation of poaching on the rise in Kenya," he said.

Until the problem is stamped out, the Wildlife Service will continue to patrol the airports with dogs like Charles, the black-haired star of Tuesday

traditional leadership."

The gap between treatment and new infections in sub-Saharan countries posed a financial threat to the treatment schemes, said Stella Anyangwe of the WHO in South Africa.

"At the rate it is going, it is almost impossible that every country gives free treatment to everyone," she said.

South Africa, which has the world's largest HIV positive population of nearly six million, had developed a "very coherent" prevention programme, said Stirling.

"2008 was an important transition year on the

prevention. We are not seeing the results yet, but the strategy is there and the results will come."

The joint report, launched in Geneva on Wednesday, showed that more than four million people from poor and middle-income countries received HIV/AIDS treatment in 2008.

Of an estimated 9.5 million people who needed treatment in these countries in 2008, 42 percent or 4.03 million were receiving anti-retroviral therapy.

In 2007, just 2.97 million were getting treatment, according to the report.



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Aruba TODAY



Cleveland Indians fire manager Eric Wedge

CLEVELAND (AP) -- The Cleveland Indians fired manager Eric Wedge in the final days of a terrible season.

Wedge guided the Indians to one playoff appearance in seven seasons, and this year the club fell out of contention early and is

currently one game out of last place in the AL Central.

The Indians, who are 64-92, have scheduled a Wednesday afternoon news conference at Progressive Field to announce Wedge's dismissal.

Cleveland recently lost

Nadal gets medical clearance to resume playing



BARCELONA, Spain (AP)—Rafael Nadal has recovered from an abdominal injury and made himself available for Spain's Davis Cup final against the Czech Republic in December. Nadal said in an e-mail that medical tests he had in Barcelona on Wednesday showed his stomach muscle had healed. He hasn't played since losing in the U.S. Open semifinals to eventual champion Juan Martin del Potro.

Nadal plans to resume playing at next week's China Open, before traveling to the Shanghai Masters, the Paris Masters and the ATP World Tour finals in London.

Defending champion Spain hosts the Czechs from Dec. 4-6.

Nadal also voiced his support for Madrid's 2016 Summer Olympics bid, which is being voted on Friday with Rio de Janeiro, Chicago and Tokyo the other contenders. □



11 straight games and has dropped 20 of its last 25 games.

Wedge, who had one year left on his contract, will finish out the season as manager, including Wednesday's doubleheader against the Chicago White Sox. Cleveland pitching coach Carl Willis, hitting coach Derek Shelton, bench coach Jeff Datz, first-base coach Luis Rivera, third-base coach Joel Skinner and bullpen coach Chuck Hernandez were also told they will not be retained, but some could be rehired by the Indians' next manager.

The Indians are expected to begin interviews for a new manager in the weeks ahead. Among the names that figure to be mentioned are Boston pitching coach John Farrell, former Indians manager Mike Hargrove, former Arizona manager Buck Showalter and Torey Lovullo, who managed the Indians' Triple-A Columbus

franchise.

Cleveland has a long history of hiring within the organization. The last time the Indians went outside was in 1990, when they hired John McNamara.

Two years ago, Cleveland was one win away from a World Series trip. The Indians fell to 81-81 in 2008, but were expected to bounce back and contend this season.

However, a slow start snowballed and by midseason the midmarket club, which is projected to lose at least \$16 million this season, traded defending Cy Young winner Cliff Lee and All-Star catcher Victor Martinez to begin rebuilding again.

Those moves triggered outrage among Cleveland's fans and led to questions about why the team would deal its best players one season before they were eligible for free agency.

Owners Larry and Paul

Dolan and general manager Mark Shapiro have spent the past several weeks reviewing Cleveland's organization, including the manager, and initially said they would wait until after the season before making a decision on Wedge. However, they decided not to delay what many Indians players felt was inevitable.

"When you lose changes are made," catcher Kelly Shoppach. "Nobody is happy when you lose."

The 41-year-old Wedge was the AL manager of the year in 2007, when the Indians won 96 games -- tied for most in the majors -- and held a 3-1 lead in the championship series over Boston before the Red Sox rallied and won three straight.

Wedge has compiled a 560-568 record in his seven seasons. He ranks fifth all-time in club history for wins, 10 behind Hall of Famer Al Lopez. □

Three-time gold medalist Henry quits

SYDNEY -- Three-time Olympic gold medalist Jodie Henry has quit competitive swimming.

The 25-year-old Australian, who once was the reigning Olympic and world champion in the 100-meter freestyle, submitted her retirement forms to Swimming Australia on Wednesday.

It came less than a month after fellow Australian sprinter Libby Trickett, a multiple Olympic and world championship gold medalist, announced she was taking a break from international competition with a view to retirement.

At the 2004 Athens Olympics, Henry won the 100 freestyle, breaking the world record in the semifinals, and anchored the Australian women to two relay gold medals in world-record time. She missed last year's Beijing Olympics due to a pelvic injury. □

Timing awkward ahead of Games vote

ROME -- A World Cup swimming event scheduled for Rio de Janeiro next month has been canceled after organizers failed to come up with enough funding.

The announcement comes at a particularly delicate moment, with Rio competing against Chicago, Madrid and Tokyo in Friday's vote to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.

"There are no financial resources. They cannot find any funding. They say they cannot do it," Cornel Marculescu, the executive director of swimming governing body FINA, told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The World Cup page on FINA's Web site has a line crossing out the Rio meet, with the word "canceled" printed twice. Marculescu said Rio informed FINA of the decision "two or three weeks ago," adding that the Brazilian city has also pulled out of hosting World Cup events from 2010 to 2013. Marculescu refused to speculate if the cancellations would have any effect on the IOC vote.

"I only know about my own



sport, and there will be no World Cup in Rio for the next four years," he said. "The Olympic Games is a different budget. Rio's proposals for aquatics venues are very good."

The move is also surprising because of interest generated after Cesar Cielo swept the 50- and 100-meter freestyle events in Rome a few months ago for

Brazil's first gold medals in 27 years at a swimming world championship.

Belo Horizonte has hosted a World Cup event for the past several years, but the Brazilian federation wanted to move the meet to Rio to attract a better international field.

"Belo Horizonte is difficult to get to," Marculescu noted. "You have to change planes in

Rio or Sao Paulo."

Without Rio, only five World Cup events will be held this year -- in Durban, South Africa; Moscow; Stockholm; Berlin; and Singapore.

From 2010 to 2013 there will be seven short-course meets -- in Berlin, Stockholm, Moscow, Dubai and Singapore; and at sites to be determined in China and Japan. □

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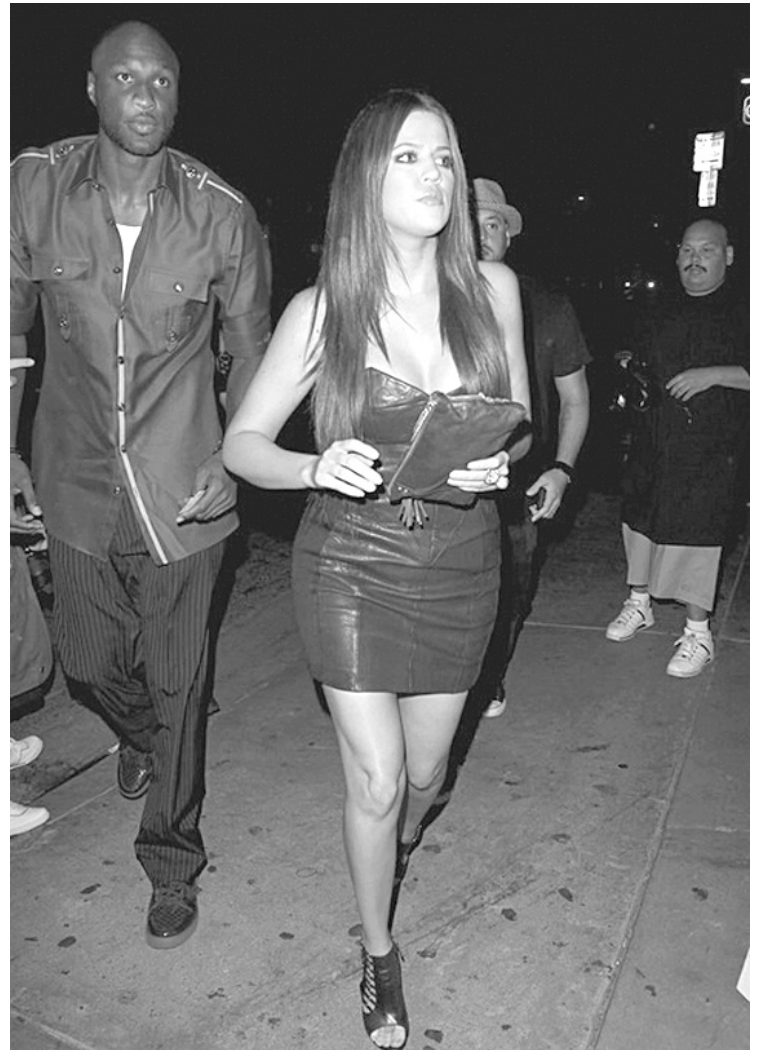
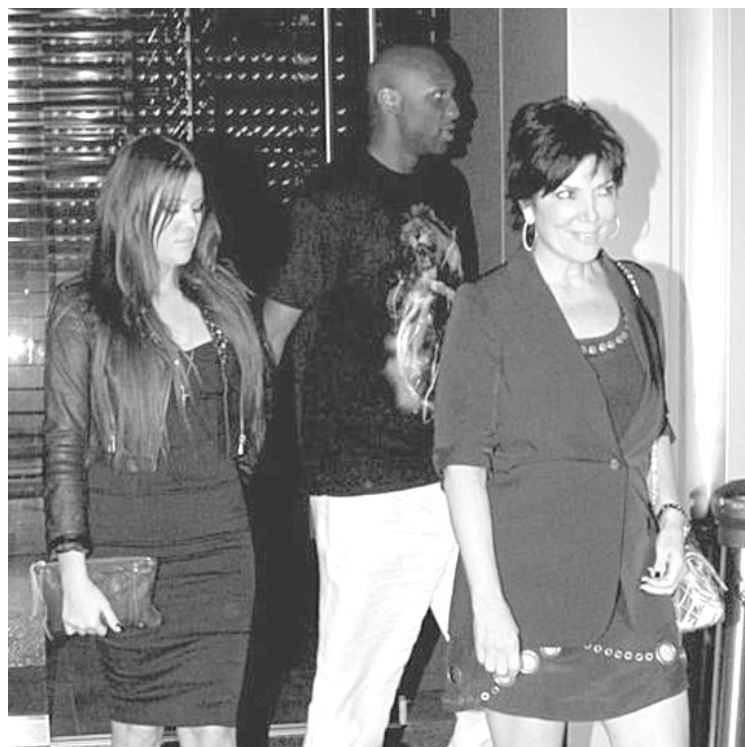
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Lamar Odom Says Marriage To Khloe Kardashian Is 'Real'



LOS ANGELES- Even though their friends and family have been saying how happy they are for newlyweds Lamar Odom and Khloe Kardashian, there is still some speculation



surrounding the legitimacy of the marriage.

With a reality-show camera crew at the ceremony and varying reports about the state of a prenuptial agreement between the pair, it seems that some people question whether the two are actually married.

But Odom wants the world to know that his marriage to Khloe, who he had been

dating for only a month before marrying her on Sunday, is "real" and "legal."

"It's crazy how perception works in America when you're looking at things from the outside," Odom told reporters, according to the Los Angeles Times.

"It might be off, it might be on. But anybody that was there will tell you that it was a beautiful event and it was real." Odom was also quick to shut down rumors that he married the reality starlet in order to garner more publicity. "I don't need that. I get enough with the Lakers," he said. "I do well for myself."

He also defended the couple's choice to marry so quickly. They may have only known each other for a month before they married, but he doesn't think that will hurt them in the long run. "There's people who've been married for 25 years and they get divorced," he explained. "There's people who get married overnight and the next thing you know they've been married 25 years." □

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Diálogo en crisis de Honduras es probable: OEA

TEGUCIGALPA (Reuters) - Representantes del Gobierno de facto de Honduras y del derrocado presidente Manuel Zelaya podrían sentarse a negociar la próxima semana para destrabar la crisis política del país, durante la visita de una misión de la OEA, dijo el miércoles un enviado del organismo.

El Gobierno de facto invitó esta semana a una misión de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) a visitar el país el miércoles 7 de octubre. Y este viernes autorizaría el ingreso de una misión de avanzada para preparar la visita, que en un principio fue prohibida para evitar “interferencias foráneas”.

“He encontrado muy buena voluntad en ambas partes para sentarse a ese diálogo (...) para que ese diálogo sea un diálogo real”, dijo el miércoles a periodistas John Biehl, asesor del secretario general de la OEA, José Miguel Insulza.

“Los cancilleres llegarán el día 7 y la idea es respaldar lo que va a ser un diálogo para encontrar una solución pacífica, voluntad que hemos encontrado esta vez mucho



Simpatizantes de Radio Globo caminan cerca de soldados frente del palacio presidencial en Tegucigalpa, 30 sep 2009. Representantes del Gobierno de facto de Honduras y del derrocado presidente Manuel Zelaya podrían sentarse a negociar la próxima semana para destrabar la crisis política del país, durante la visita de una misión de la OEA, dijo el miércoles un enviado del organismo. REUTERS/Henry Romero

más firme en ambos bandos y probablemente el diálogo se iniciaría cuando estén aquí los cancilleres”, agregó.

La OEA exige la restitución del presidente depuesto, Manuel Zelaya, que fue sacado a punta de rifle de su casa el 28 de

junio. Pero el mandatario de facto, Roberto Micheletti, ha dicho que eso es imposible.

El “Acuerdo de San José”, una propuesta del presidente costarricense Oscar Arias respaldada por la OEA y que gira en torno a la restitución

de Zelaya, naufragó en el pasado después de varias rondas de negociaciones ante la intransigencia de las partes en sus posturas.

LOS “MEJORES REPRESENTANTES”

Biehl dijo que ni Micheletti ni Zelaya participarían en las conversaciones, pero que esperaba que ellos nombraran a sus “mejores representantes”. Micheletti dijo el miércoles que el plan de Arias podría sufrir cambios para alcanzar un “acuerdo aceptable”, sin dar más detalles.

“Lo que quieren ver ellos (los cancilleres) es un diálogo que ya se inició en algunos sectores pero no sabemos cómo va a terminar”, dijo Micheletti en conferencia de prensa. No obstante, agregó que “en los asuntos de los hondureños no deben intervenir personajes u organismos externos”.

Empresarios de Honduras que apoyaron el golpe militar propusieron el martes la restitución de Zelaya pero sin autoridad y bajo arresto domiciliario, como salida a la crisis en la nación centroamericana.

La propuesta del presidente de la Asociación Nacional de Industriales, Adolfo Facussé, cumple con la demanda de la comunidad internacional de restituir a Zelaya, aunque sólo simbólicamente. □

Candidato Germán Vargas cree posible derrotar a Uribe en Colombia

BOGOTA (Reuters) - El candidato presidencial colombiano Germán Vargas, antiguo aliado del presidente Alvaro Uribe, dijo el miércoles que si el mandatario se presenta a los comicios del 2010 para buscar su segunda reelección, podría ser derrotado con una alianza de diferentes fuerzas políticas.

El dirigente de 47 años, quien apoyó a Uribe en la campaña que lo llevó al poder en 2002 y respaldó su primera reelección en el 2006, tiene posibilidades en la próxima contienda comicial, de acuerdo con analistas y proyecciones iniciales.

Pero el líder de Cambio Radical decidió alejarse del mandatario y buscar la presidencia, para lo que inició acercamientos con el Partido Liberal, al que perteneció, con la intención de forjar una alianza sólida que le permita derrotar a Uribe si es habilitado para ser candidato y si decide serlo.

“Me parece que una nueva reelección es inconveniente. Lo es para la democracia colombiana, para sus instituciones, creo que también para el propio presidente. No me parece conveniente que se force nuevamente una enmienda constitucional”, dijo Vargas en una entrevista con Reuters.

“La búsqueda del consenso sí. Eso implica interesar

y vincular a varios sectores al proceso mismo y el único instrumento para lograrlo es una consulta que democráticamente nos permita llegar con un criterio unificado”, explicó.

Vargas, quien se destacó como senador y se ha caracterizado por su fuerte discurso contra la guerrilla izquierdista, dijo que está dispuesto a participar en una consulta interpartidista con el liberal Rafael Pardo y otros independientes para sacar un candidato fuerte y capaz de vencer a Uribe en las urnas.

“El candidato que resulte ahí seleccionado representaría a una coalición de sectores que tienen un origen liberal y algunos independientes y eso fortalece naturalmente las opciones”, aseguró.

Sin embargo, descartó una alianza con el izquierdista Polo Democrático Alternativo y su candidato Gustavo Petro, elegido el fin de semana en una consulta interna de ese partido.

CANDIDATURA URIBE CAMBIA ESCENARIO

El Congreso de Colombia aprobó un referendo que habilita a Uribe para buscar su segunda reelección inmediata. La legalidad jurídica de la iniciativa es examinada por la Corte Constitucional que puede

aprobarla o declararla ilegal. Esta segunda opción la bloquearía.

Pero si el tribunal lo aprueba, el Gobierno deberá convocar al referendo y éste deberá ser votado por más de 7,5 millones de electores y obtener la mayoría de sufragios para que se apruebe la reforma constitucional y Uribe pueda ser candidato.

Vargas, quien sobrevivió a dos ataques con explosivos de la guerrilla de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), confió en que la corte declare ilegal el referendo y advirtió que la falta de tiempo es un factor en contra. □



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